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Safety recommendations reminders from the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland on the COVID-19 pandemic

As COVID-19 seems to be resurging and new variants of the virus emerge in Northeast Ohio, it is necessary once again to offer recommendations and reminders based on the latest guidance from federal, state and local public health agencies for the safety of all who worship at Catholic parishes throughout the Diocese of Cleveland.

Pope Francis reminds everyone that “Vaccines are an essential tool in this fight” against the virus. Those who are eligible should talk to their health care provider and seriously consider getting vaccinated to protect their health, the health of others, and to ease the increased burdens on our healthcare system and those who work there, many of them who are heroes to us.

All ministries of the Diocese of Cleveland, including parishes, schools, PSR, youth ministry and the like, are collaborating with and considering the various recommendations of public health authorities as they continue in their efforts to reduce the risk of COVID-19 for those they serve.

All persons – whether vaccinated or unvaccinated – should consider wearing masks when in close proximity to others. Frequent hand washing and practicing social distancing also are strongly encouraged. Health professionals say that these steps, along with regular disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, will help prevent the spread of the disease.

It is inevitable that people will make different choices about masking and other public health recommendations. Everyone is reminded to show kindness and respect to one another, especially those who may be taking an approach different from their own. Individuals and families must decide for themselves how best to respond to the current situation taking into consideration information from credible health authorities while following our Lord’s command, “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (John 13:34).

Those who are ill, have significant health risk factors or care for someone who is immune-compromised or ill, as well as those who have significant fear or anxiety about contracting the coronavirus in a large group of persons are not obliged to attend Mass.

Remember that the situation continues to be fluid. Stay connected to information coming from national, state and local health authorities and stay home and get tested for COVID when you are not feeling well. Following these recommendations will go a long way in helping to keep you and others around you safe.

Jesus reminded his Apostles in the Gospel of Matthew to “take courage and do not be afraid” when facing the storm. Jesus remains with us today and through our faith in him and our love for one another, we too can endure the trying challenges facing us today.

Thanks to all who have done their part to reduce the risk of infection for themselves and others. May God bless and watch over us in our time of need.