

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, Bishop David Malloy sent a letter addressed to the priests of the Rockford Diocese in response to the Executive Order issued on August 26<sup>th</sup> by Governor JB Pritzker. In this letter the Bishop details how the State's mandate regarding masks will be implemented here in the Rockford Diocese. Below is the Bishop's letter in full:

“The Executive Order requires, and the Diocese is implementing the following:

“Beginning on Monday, August 30, 2021, all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, age two or over and able to medically tolerate a face covering (a mask or cloth face covering) are required to cover their nose and mouth with a face covering when indoors on the premises of our churches, schools, and Diocesan facilities. Face coverings may be removed temporarily while actively eating or drinking, and may be removed by workers at workplaces when they can consistently maintain six feet of distance (such as when workers are in their office or cubicle space).”

“Masks are to be worn by all at Masses, as well as inside the Church building. Masks may be removed during Mass by priests, deacons, and lectors when they read at the ambo, proclaim the gospel, and preach. The faithful may remove or lower their masks when receiving Holy Communion. Choir members may remove their masks during Masses when singing, although pastors may use their judgement, if the choir is located close to the faithful attending Mass, in deciding whether Masses should include a choir at this time. Musicians who play mouth instruments may remove their masks during Masses when playing those instruments.”

“Masks must also be worn inside buses and other vehicles when transportation is provided by a parish, school, or the Diocese, such as students on a bus taking a school field trip, a parish trip to visit a shrine, high school team players on a bus going to a track meet.”