

Dear Parishioners of St. Teresa of Avila Parish,

Due to the declaration from the Governor of the State of Ohio and the Lorain County Board of Health, that Lorain County has reached a Level 3 COVID health risk, the following steps are required in all public places, including Churches, until the risk level is lowered:

Facial masks or coverings shall be worn by individuals. Therefore, I am asking parishioners to wear masks when attending Mass.

There are, however, exceptions to this directive:

1. Individuals with medical conditions, including those with respiratory conditions that restrict breathing, mental health conditions, or disabilities that restrict the wearing of facial coverings are not required to wear a mask.
2. Children under the age of 10 are not required to wear a mask.
3. Officiates of religious services are not required to wear masks, therefore priests are exempt. Also, in his press conference, the Governor said Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers, because they must speak in order to fulfill their ministry, are not required to wear masks. As the Governor said, this order is being interpreted broadly. At Saint Teresa, I ask that Lectors do not wear masks while reading. I however, encourage Eucharistic Ministers to wear a mask while distributing communion.

The difficulty will be enforcing this directive. According to the Diocese, the wearing of masks is “highly recommended”, while at the same time Pastors “shouldn’t worry if someone chooses not to wear one” and “no one will be excluded for not wearing a mask.” Therefore, I ask you to be kind if you come across someone who is not wearing a mask. Do not make the encounter an excuse for someone to turn away from Christ and His Church.

In Christ,

The Reverend Edward J. Smith

Pastor