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Bishop Douglas Deshotel's Statement on Urgent Need to Wear Masks

The last week has seen a dramatic increase in the number of people testing positive for COVID-19. The Acadiana area, which includes the Diocese of Lafayette, is among the highest areas in the State of Louisiana.

I wish to remind all the Faithful of the Diocese that we are still in Phase II of the guidelines for reopening set forth by the State of Louisiana and the Center for Disease Control. Measures to prevent the spread of the virus remain the same: Good hygiene, especially frequent hand washing, staying home if you experience any symptoms, social distancing of six feet, and wearing a mask when in public gatherings.

When we gather for Mass, Funerals, Weddings, etc., we are in a public gathering. While not mandated by the State of Louisiana yet, I join with my fellow Bishops in Louisiana to strongly urge everyone to wear a mask in Church. This is protection for you and those around you.

Infection rates have been spiking in younger adults. While they may not feel sick, they are nevertheless carriers. Many complain that wearing a mask is uncomfortable and bothersome. The temporary inconvenience is worth bearing to protect ones' own health and those of others.

We don't need a law or mandate to tell us of our Christian calling to Charity and care for the well-being of our neighbor. I therefore, appeal to everyone to wear a mask in public including during Church gatherings. All are still dispensed from the obligation of Sunday Mass, but if you attend please wear a mask.

Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, D.D.
Bishop of Lafayette

PLEASE READ THIS STATEMENT AT ALL MASSES ON THE WEEKEND OF JULY 11 AND 12.