



Diocese of Shreveport

Office of the Bishop

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February 2, 2022

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Shreveport:

Re: Lifting of Restrictions related to the Pandemic

Every day offers us a new look at the pandemic and the restrictions that have impacted our churches and schools in the diocese. Today's edition of *The Shreveport Times* gave us a new look.

I took the opportunity to contact Dr. John Vanchiere as a follow-up to our conversation at the end of 2021 in which it was recommended that we hold to the restrictions that included the use of face masks, and the restrictions related to the gathering of large groups of the faithful. This included parish events like Religious Education, and school events. It was a painful decision but was based on what was considered the safest approach for one another. In my discussion with Dr. Vanchiere in December, he expressed his hope that with February, we should anticipate a lessening of the impact of the virus. In today's conversation with him, he informed me that at present the numbers (as predicted) have indeed lessened.

It is his opinion, and thus mine, that the restrictions now in place can be lifted, effective immediately. Specifically, while the wearing of masks is recommended, they are no longer required. School Masses may resume, as well as large gatherings, receptions, et cetera.

I know that you welcome this news, as I do. I want to express my gratitude to those members of the faithful who contacted me in support of doing that which, for the time was deemed necessary for the health of one another. And while there is no guarantee that future spikes will not occur, the present lessening of numbers warrants this "lifting." Let us continue to pray for those who are still suffering from the virus, for those in the health care field, and for one another, and certainly for a continued lessening of the numbers.

Know of my daily prayers for you all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Francis I. Malone, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Shreveport