



**Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo**  
***Orthodox Church in America***

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Martyrs Sergios and Bacchos

My dear Fathers, brothers and sisters,

I have recently lightened the burden somewhat with respect to precautions regarding the virus but some of the wording was perhaps ambiguous. I wish, therefore, to make it clear, the wearing of face coverings will be required in parishes and missions of our Diocese until the crisis abates. This may occur with a vaccine or with the virus itself degrading to the level of an ordinary flu (which can happen). In the meantime, however, the danger of transmission remains. My focus is on reduction of risk through the primary means of transmission, which is airborne. Therefore, face coverings are non-negotiable in my parishes and missions.

Further, as I have insisted from the beginning, please minimize the risk introduced through singing by limiting the non-masked singers in any choir to the maximum number that can remain six feet apart (if your choir is comfortable singing with face coverings, this is even better).

The matter of physical distancing inside the temple, however, might be adjusted within the limits of your respective civil authorities in order to allow more persons inside and I therefore bless it.

With love in Christ,

*Archbishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese –  
Orthodox Church in America*