



Reverend Fathers and Deacons, and my Sisters and Brothers in Christ,:

As a Christian community, we are called to love and care for one another, as Christ taught us. In the face of the COVID-19 virus which has plagued our communities over the past eighteen months, and the threat of the more recent Delta and other pernicious variants, the Diocese of Thunder Bay has sought to ensure that our Churches and the people with whom we minister are kept as safe as possible. We have complied with the various public health directives, including the wearing of masks, hand sanitization, distancing, and have even adjusted some of our liturgical practices to provide safe environments in our parishes. In addition, we have encouraged everyone to receive whatever approved vaccines are available not only for their personal protection against the virus, but also to stop as much as possible, the spread of the virus in our communities.

In recent weeks, the bishops of Ontario, governments, public institutions and local businesses have developed policies designed to promote an increase of vaccinations as a proven means of diminishing the further spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Accompanying this letter, you will find the *COVID-19 Vaccination Policy of the Diocese of Thunder Bay*. While vaccines are not being mandated for clergy, employees and volunteers in our parishes and institutions at this time, the Diocese will require confirmation of their vaccination status, which may impact their ability to perform certain duties. Please read the policy carefully and follow the required reporting process. *Clergy* report to the Chancellor, all other *Staff* report to Susan Nistico while *Volunteers* report to their appropriate pastor.

In closing, I ask that all clergy, employees and volunteers in the Diocese of Thunder Bay renew their commitment to work together to safeguard the health and safety of all whom we are called to serve.

Sincerely,

+*Fred J. Colli*

Most Rev. Fred J. Colli

Bishop of Thunder Bay