



Archdiocese of | Archidiocèse d' Halifax-Yarmouth

December 23, 2021

To the faithful of the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth,

For Catholics the final weeks of December are marked by anticipation for the celebration of the Lord's Nativity at Christmas. This year our anticipation is clouded by a significant increase in COVID cases and shifting restrictions.

The limit for faith gatherings – 25% capacity to a maximum of 50 people – means our churches are unable to accommodate the many thousands of people who normally attend Mass on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Each parish is responding to these restrictions based on local circumstances.

Some parishes are unable to hold in-person Masses due to capacity limits, while others have greatly reduced seating. If you plan to attend in person, please call ahead to ensure you understand the times and requirements. It is very likely some people may be unable to get seats. I call everyone to understanding, patience, and charity. These restrictions are challenging during the Christmas season when gathering in community is the norm. However, our vigilance with our provincial guidelines can also be an expression of care and compassion for all.

I also wish to reiterate my dispensation of the obligation to attend Mass during the pandemic. All of our parishes are offering live stream broadcasts of Christmas liturgies as a means to stay connected this Christmas. Additionally, the 8:00pm Christmas Eve Mass from St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica will be broadcast on Eastlink community television (carols begin at 7:30pm).

This Christmas may we welcome the Lord in our midst by welcoming Him into our homes through personal prayer, acts of charity, and spiritual communion. May all those impacted by this global pandemic experience the grace of peace of God that surpasses all understanding.

Sincerely in Christ,



Brian Joseph Dunn
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth