

## DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH

9995 North Military Trail • P.O. Box 109650  
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida 33410-9650

(561) 775-9595 Fax (561) 775-7035

Office of  
THE BISHOP

November 19, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Much time has gone by since the coronavirus has manifested itself and affected our lives in manners we never imagined. I wish to assure you of my continued prayers during these challenging times and to thank you for your cooperation and assistance in regard to the protocols in place within our Diocese to ensure safety while attending church.

Many questions arise at the present time as to where we are going and what we should do. I would like to offer you as much assistance in regard to these questions but there is probably more uncertainty now, especially as the cases of the coronavirus continue to increase within our country and area, as we face an influx of winter residents and as the holidays approach. However, we have learned that, from the measures put in place within our Diocese, all of the Dioceses in Florida and throughout the United States, Catholic churches are among the safest places to be due to the caution that has been exercised.

In view of this, the protocols which are currently in place will remain in place with few exceptions. Your parishes will be informing you of possible accommodations for Christmas in regard to the use of parish halls and extra Masses to accommodate what we really cannot estimate to be the attendance for the day. ***In this regard, I am allowing the celebration of Christmas Vigil Masses to take place as early as 2:00 PM on Christmas Eve for whatever parishes wish to avail of this option.*** The dispensation from the obligation of Sunday Mass remains in place should anyone feel uncomfortable to attend, especially if there may be a larger attendance.

One protocol that will change is that regarding the use of masks for public celebration. The present protocol highly recommends that they be used. However, in light of what we have learned about the safety of masks, the increasing of cases and to accommodate the needs of those present for Mass, ***masks will be required for all who enter the Church effective as of now.***


I, again, wish to thank you for your cooperation during these challenging months and assure you of my continued prayers.

Let us pray that a vaccine will become available as quickly as possible and that some semblance of normalcy will return.

May Thanksgiving be blessed for you and your families.

With every prayerful wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito  
Bishop of Palm Beach