

**Cindy Wood**

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**From:** Father Lincoln Dall <mail@flocknote.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 19, 2020 1:58 PM  
**To:** Cindy Wood  
**Subject:** Diocesan COVID-19 Directives Update

## Advent approaches

### Diocesan Directives for COVID-19



Dear Pastors, LEMs, Associates, Deacons, Parish Leadership  
and Parish Bookkeepers:

The Season of Advent is fast approaching. This beautiful  
season, rich in complex themes of joyful anticipation,

penitence, longing, and hope begins our Church's liturgical year and gives us an opportunity to examine our consciences in the sure hope of Christ's coming.

This past year has been filled with tremendous loss, grief, anxiety, hurt, unrest and fear. Advent gives us an opportunity to focus on the calm and peace that this quiet anticipation tempered with a penitent heart will lead us to Emmanuel – God With Us.

The beauty of Advent is found in the holy longing for an encounter with Emmanuel and this can only be achieved by healing broken bridges and broken hearts. This healing comes through our witness as pastors and parish leaders to service and sacrifice on behalf of our people.

In our Priests' Council last week, we discussed the current diocesan liturgical directives and protective measures the diocese has in place because of COVID-19. The most up to date version is attached.

**We want to reiterate that all of these directives and measures are still in place and apply to all Masses, Holy Days, weddings, funerals, quinceañeras, in any language in any place. There has been no loosening of these restrictions in our churches regardless of local civic ordinances.**

Medical experts have emphasized that the sooner we all take on the responsibility of safeguarding ourselves by wearing masks properly, socially distancing at indoor and outdoor events, avoiding large indoor gatherings, washing hands and sanitizing frequently touched surfaces, we will protect others and help lower transmission. We all must do our part in service to the common good.

As pastors and parish leaders we have a profound responsibility to lead, guide, nurture and protect our flock. We do not need to let situations occur which place people at risk of contracting a deadly virus.

Unfortunately, we have seen examples contrary to the directives on parish Facebook pages with churches packed for

weddings and people not wearing masks. We must remain vigilant, especially as numbers continue to rise. If we act responsibly and lead by example our people will follow. We must be witnesses to the fact that this virus is very real and deadly.

By our witness we can instill in our parishioners that wearing a mask and social distancing is an act of love and sacrifice. Wearing a mask and social distancing is an act of service. Wearing a mask and social distancing is pro-life.

Through our witness, we can soften the disappointment when a long-awaited wedding ceremony must be scaled down to protect friends and loved ones.

Through our witness, we can soften the disappointment when this year's Immaculate Conception, Guadalupe and Christmas celebrations must be minimal and follow the COVID safety established numbers for inside our churches and parish halls. Socially distanced outdoor processions with masks for all involved are permissible.

Yes, we are all incredibly tired of these restrictions, but we must journey on knowing that each time we sacrifice a little, we are helping protect someone else and that we are not adding stress to our exhausted health-care workers. Imagine how tired they are. We must be in solidarity with them and support them by doing the simple responsible things such as wearing a mask, staying six feet apart, washing our hands and sanitizing our pews. It is the least we can do out of respect for the battle they wage every second of every day.

**These are not normal times, and we should not try to create a sense of normalcy.** Doing so diminishes the great loss so many have suffered.

Out of respect for the 250,000+ in our country who have died from this virus, out of respect for their devastated families, and out of respect for first responders and health care workers beyond exhaustion, we must sacrifice large weddings and large indoor gatherings. We must serve them

and one another in love by wearing masks and social distancing.

As we approach Advent, that great season of holy longing and the beginning of a new liturgical year, let us imagine ourselves as the early Christians in the darkness of the catacombs where solace and safety from an evil scourge were sought; having the great faith and hope that one day soon they would be able to freely live as a eucharistic worshipping community in the light.

That day indeed will come again for us, but until then, let us be loving witnesses of service and sacrifice for our flock to confidently follow in faith. Thank you for your commitment and dedication. Let us pray for one another in this season of hope and anticipation.

## **UPDATED DIOCESAN DIRECTIVES**

Updated November 17, 2020

### **GENERAL**

- Bishop Kopacz continues to dispense the faithful from the Sunday Obligation to participate in Mass until further notice.
- Protocols you are using for weekday and Sunday Masses also apply to all other liturgies and rites such as Baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, Weddings, Funerals, Quinceañeras, Guadalupe, Christmas etc.
  - Masks are required to be worn properly by all over the age of two;
  - Social Distancing is required – all must be six feet apart (if they live in same household, they may sit in same pew);

- Each parish should have a maximum capacity number and should stick to that number. Add a Mass if necessary – do not overcrowd churches!
- Pews and restrooms must be sanitized after each celebration;
- Hand sanitizer and masks should be made available to those who don't have them;
- Group photos should be socially distanced, and masks should be worn;
- No receptions should be held after or before the celebration;
- Rehearsal dinners should not be held on parish property. Clergy should be cautious in attending such events.
- **Social distancing at parish gatherings other than liturgies**, such as processions, Knights of Columbus, ladies club, AA groups, adult Bible study group, etc., should follow the same requirements we have in place for liturgies.
  - Outdoor gatherings in lieu of large indoor gatherings are encouraged, especially in locations with smaller parish centers
- Home Masses: At this time, Masses may not be celebrated in private homes or properties of parishioners. This places everyone at risk.
- **Holy Communion is still to be distributed in the hand only.**
- Choir and Ensemble singing and practices are suspended until further notice.
  - Instrumental processions instead of hymns may be used, especially at the distribution of communion and the recessional;
  - Incorporating the entrance and communion antiphons by the cantor is highly encouraged.
- Live-streaming of Mass may continue. Any music broadcast that is not in the public domain must have a copyright license and must be reported to the copyright holder. There is a waiver for broadcasting

Scripture until the end of the year, so no copyright license is needed for broadcasting the readings at this time.

- Live-streaming to overflow crowds in parish centers or gyms on parish campuses though not ideal for participation will be allowed during this time.
- Overnight events are suspended until further notice.
- Long trips or mission trips for parish groups are suspended until further notice.

## CHRISTMAS VIGILS

- **Christmas vigil Masses may be celebrated as early as 2 pm on Dec. 24.** We know the difference between validity and liceity in terms of the number of Masses being allowed to be celebrated in one day. We advise you to safeguard your spiritual well-being by not adding too many Masses.
- **The Office of Liturgy suggests the Christmas Day Readings (Lectionary #16)** be used for all the Masses of Christmas in order to emphasize the Word dwelling among us.

## GUADALUPE

- **Guadalupe** celebrations are subject to the protocols established for all other Masses and parish gatherings, i.e. social distancing, masks, no large indoor gatherings going beyond the safe capacity of the space. **Outdoor socially distanced events with masks are appropriate on Dec. 12. Dec. 13 is the Sunday of Advent so no Masses for the Feast of Guadalupe may be celebrated on Sunday, Dec. 13. Guadalupe is not a moveable feast.**
- Processions for Guadalupe outside of Mass may occur on Sunday afternoon if that is the only option – as long as they are appropriate in terms of social distancing.

- Subdued celebrations respect those who have suffered and are suffering from COVID-19.

## ADVENT PENANCE SERVICES

- Advent Penance Services should be small and not involve multiple priests traveling to different parishes to assist in these. **An appropriate alternative would be to have several opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation throughout the Advent season.**
- Perhaps adoration could be incorporated as a part of these multiple offerings.

Stay safe and be vigilant! Take care of your flocks.

Come, Lord Jesus!



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