



Memorandum

Cathedral Square Plaza

OFFICE OF THE MODERATOR OF THE CURIA

To: Priests

From: Reverend Donald P. Oleksiak – Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia

Date: 03 January 2022

Re: Updates for the New Year.

Happy New Year!

I hope and pray you are healthy and were able to enjoy time with family and friends during the holidays. As you know the new Omicron variant of COVID is wreaking havoc on families and infecting large numbers of people. It is also causing us to review and adjust some of the diocesan events planned for the upcoming months. Fr. Dan Schlegel has been working overtime trying to coordinate coverage for the number of priests who have come down with the new strain and are unable to cover weekend Masses. We ask that you contact Fr. Schlegel (dschlegel@dioceseofcleveland.org; or ext. 2440) or me (doleksiak@dioceseofcleveland.org; or ext. 3800) if you are diagnosed with COVID. Please understand that:

- We are not able to provide Mass coverage for weekday Masses. We recommend posting the neighboring Mass schedule on your church doors.
- We will do our best to provide coverage for your weekend Masses, if necessary.
- If you are at a parish with multiple priests and would be willing to help us provide coverage in these situations please let Fr. Dan know.
- We encourage you to work with your neighboring parishes to provide funeral coverage during the week.
- We also encourage you to reschedule large group gatherings/meetings/events for the next few weeks as we evaluate the continued spread of the virus and its impact on the diocese.
- We strongly encourage you to ask your people to wear masks when they are in church.
- We strongly ask that you encourage them to be vaccinated if they are medically able to do so for the common good.

In addition,

- The bishop has decided to cancel the diocesan district Mass and social gatherings; information will be forthcoming from your local convener.
- The diocesan celebration of the Rite of Election will be moved from the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist to the local parishes in order to avoid large crowds. You will receive more details about this in the near future.

We are aware of the great tension that exists around this issue of the pandemic from both sides of the issue. We rely on the information from health experts and medical professionals to guide our decisions. The bishop has not mandated the wearing of masks (except for the distribution of Holy Communion) at Mass but strongly recommends that facemasks be worn in church. **Remember that those who are ill, have significant health risk factors or care for someone who is immune-**

compromised or ill, as well as those who have significant fear or anxiety about contracting the coronavirus in a large group of persons are not obliged to attend Mass. You are encouraged to read the attached document from the Catholic Medical Association.

Please know we are here to support you and help you as best as we can. You are asked to continue to include a prayer for the end to the pandemic in your daily petitions at Mass and to do your best to stay healthy. Be assured of our prayers for you and those entrusted to your care.