

Archdiocese of Santa Fe  
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## OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

December 8, 2020

My Dear Priests, Deacons, Religious, and all Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In October, Archbishop Gomez, President of the USCCB, sent a *dubium* to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. The question regarded the number of Masses a priest could say on Christmas. At issue was the reality of most parishes in nearly every region of the country – they have very limited capacity due to civil restrictions and social distancing requirements during the pandemic. The *dubium* was answered by Robert Cardinal Sarah on November 1st, 2020 and was published on November 20th, 2020 by Monsignor Jeffrey Burrill, General Secretary of the USCCB, in a memo to all the Bishops of the USA.

With these thoughts in mind, I am promulgating the following decree issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in which an indult request has been granted for local ordinaries in the United States of America.

*Through the courtesy of the Apostolic Nunciature, the Conference received the attached decree issued by His Eminence Robert Cardinal Sarah, Prefect, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in which an indult request has been granted for local ordinaries in the United States of America to allow priests in their diocese to celebrate up to four Masses on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day due to the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. **I grant this permission for Christmas 2020 only.***

This means that a priest may say four Masses on December 24 and four Masses on December 25 (a total of eight). The rule applies to the calendar day, not the hours of the solemnity. (also see Commentary on the Code, under 905.)

In the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the Anticipated Mass for Sundays and the Vigil Mass for Solemnities, like the Nativity of the Lord, are celebrated no earlier than 4:00PM. So, the first Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve can begin as early as 4:00 PM.

If there is a genuine need, because of the limits imposed by social distancing, the lack of additional facilities, and lack of available priests, then consideration may be given to a Parish Vigil Mass taking place as early as 2:00 PM. For information on the stipends for these days, please consult Can. 951 §1.

Please be alert for any future changes to these instructions. Let us continue to pray that our Loving Lord will keep all of humanity safe from COVID-19 and that He will also grant us the gift of peace during this Advent and Christmas Season, as we place all our trust in Him.

Fraternally yours in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John C. Wester'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend John C. Wester  
Archbishop of Santa Fe