



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Office of
The Archbishop

3424
Wilshire
Boulevard

Los Angeles
California
90010-2241

December 21, 2020

Dear Brother Priests,

The days leading up to Christmas are always an incredible time of year. Even this year, as we struggle against the pandemic, I know you are in the midst of last-minute preparations trying to help your people celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Unfortunately, these are not normal times. Cases of coronavirus are surging across the country. In Southern California almost every ICU bed is already occupied.

At the same time, the cold weather makes it difficult for people to attend Mass outdoors. In response to this need, and in accordance with recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings, Los Angeles County Public Health recently gave permission for our churches to reopen, with specific limitations. We are waiting to hear from the Santa Barbara and Ventura County Departments of Public Health.

I want you to know I am concerned for your health and safety, as well as the health and safety of your people. Please remind your parishioners that the dispensation from attending Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation remains in effect. In particular, please encourage your elderly parishioners and those already in poor health to remain at home.

At this point, it will be safer to continue celebrating outdoor Masses. Please note that Los Angeles County Public Health strongly recommends that places of worship continue to hold services outdoors. However, if you believe it is better to offer live-streamed Mass only or to celebrate Mass indoors (if permitted by your County and in keeping with their protocols), you may proceed accordingly. More detailed guidance will follow.

In any case, continue to use masks and social distancing and sanitize all points of contact, in accordance with the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

I want to remind you that, since the coronavirus is so contagious, if any priest in a rectory should contract it, the entire rectory will have to quarantine. This means not leaving the rectory even to celebrate Mass or perform other ministerial activities. Please continue to notify us should you, any member of your staff, or parishioner test positive ([COVID-19 Reporting Form](#)).

Despite all these challenges, I pray that these days will be a time of blessing for you and your people. Jesus is waiting to be born into our hearts!

May Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, grant you peace and joy in this holy season,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles