December 31, 2021 (The Feast of St. Sylvester I and New Year’s Eve)

Dear Pastors and Administrators:

Re: Observing Safety Protocols & Adjusting Capacity from 33% to 25%

As we approach the beginning of the New Year, we find ourselves still in the grips of a global pandemic. In fact, at this time we are experiencing an increase in COVID-19 infections probably due to the presence among us of the newest and most infectious variant of the virus.

As a consequence, we must be vigilant and deliberate in observing all our safety protocols. Hand sanitizing, wearing of face masks and social distancing must be practiced by all those who attend worship at our parishes. In addition to existing safety protocols which have served us so well, please note:

a) The capacity for those attending worship is reduced now from 33% to 25%.
b) Face masks should be properly fitted to your face and properly worn so as to cover the nose and mouth. Face masks should be worn at all times even for those proclaiming the Word.
c) Windows and doors should remain open during worship so as to allow for maximum natural ventilation.
d) If you are experiencing cold or flu symptoms, please refrain from church attendance and seek a COVID-19 test at your earliest convenience.
e) The duration of each liturgy should not exceed 1 hour and 20 minutes.

New Year’s Eve, in particular, is a time when large numbers of the faithful like to come and worship. Our current circumstances and the necessary protocols will definitely impact attendance. The protocols are to be applied strictly but without offense. I urge the faithful to embrace these restrictive protocols in the best and most positive spirit. Our purpose is to continue to ensure personal safety and public health. Such are the demands of the current pandemic we find ourselves in.

In spite of all these concerns, I wish to convey to you heartfelt blessings as we continue the Christmas Season and best wishes for the New Year, 2022!

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Patrick C. Pinder, STD, CMG, KC*HS
Archbishop of Nassau