



December 21, 2020

### Christmas Season Lockdown Message

In a short time, Christians around the world will be celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. In the message of the angel to the shepherds in the field we hear these profoundly relevant words once more: “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, \* the Lord” (Lk 2. 10-11).

We are blessed to be able to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Saviour on the 24th and 25th of December in our parishes under our current pandemic protocols, safeguarding the health of our parish families. I want to thank the priests, deacons, religious and lay staff and dedicated parishioner volunteers for your efforts these past months to make it possible to celebrate the Eucharist in our parishes. In Christ we are united and strong!

In reflecting on the experience of the Holy Family of being alone, far from family and friends, on that first Christmas, I pray that the Holy Family will intercede for all of us who will miss the presence of family and friends this Christmas in this second period of lockdown.

As you have heard, unfortunately, we will not be able to celebrate together in person this year the other joyful Feasts in this holy Christmas Season. Collaborating with our Public Regional Health Authorities in curbing this pandemic is the charitable approach to take as we care for one another. It is a great sacrifice to make, but we do so to help put an end to the spread of the virus. I call upon all priests to celebrate Mass every day and when possible, to live-stream the Mass to allow the faithful to be in communion and benefit from the spiritual graces that come from Mass.

As done by my predecessor, I grant the dispensation of your obligation to attend Sunday Mass and the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God throughout this pandemic.

We know through faith that Christ is with us and that we have the prayerful intercession of Mary, Joseph and all the Saints in our time of trial. Let us keep one another in our prayers as we beseech the Lord’s intercession in this time Holy Season, confident of his mercy and love. Merry Christmas! May God bless you and your family.

+Marcel Damphousse  
Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall