



## DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

# DECREE

## On Pastoral Activities in the Diocese of Jefferson City after 27 November 2020

Whereas the case numbers of COVID-19 infections remain at their highest levels for many counties of Mid-Missouri; and

Whereas the common good demands that the public health requirements and recommendations of the state are to be observed whenever possible; and

Whereas the Presbyteral Council has provided their advice with regard to the ongoing reality of the pandemic; and

Whereas the current DECREE governing pastoral activities during the pandemic expires on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of November 2020;

I therefore declare, as the Diocesan Bishop, the following:

1. All dispensations, obligations and guidance of the previous DECREE of 21 August 2020, originally effective until 27 November 2020, shall now be extended until further notice.
2. All the faithful of the Diocese of Jefferson City, and those who are present in the territory of the Diocese, are therefore dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass in person on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation until further notice, provided that for days of precept they do one of the following:
  - a. Prayerfully participate in the Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation Mass live streamed from their parish church or chapel, the Cathedral, the Vatican, or of any Mass of the day celebrated in communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
  - b. Prayerfully read and meditate on the readings of the Mass for the Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation, and recite the rosary or Divine Mercy chaplet.
  - c. The faithful still have the obligation to keep the Lord's Day holy and "to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2185)

3. Parishes are highly encouraged to live stream Masses for Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation to maintain a pastoral connection with their parishioners during and after the pandemic.
4. Celebrations of penance services, as well as other seasonal services that entail extra gatherings of the faithful apart from Mass, are to be avoided. Instead, parish priests are asked to make themselves more available, even on a daily basis during the last week of Advent, to hear the confessions of the faithful.
5. Whenever possible, the faithful should present themselves to their parish priest for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick before they depart for the hospital. Because of pandemic protocols at hospitals throughout the diocese, priests may not have access to patients at the hospital.
6. The Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord [Christmas] on 24 December 2020 may be celebrated as early as 3:00 pm to accommodate an ample Mass schedule for social distancing requirements. Whenever possible, every active priest of the diocese shall celebrate a Vigil Mass of Christmas at 3:00 pm with the faithful so as to minimize large numbers congregating at the most popular Mass of the season. The allowance for a 3:00 pm Vigil Mass of Christmas is only for this year and not to be presumed for the future.

This decree is effective from 28 November 2020 and until further notice, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Jefferson City on this 11<sup>th</sup> day of November 2020.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Shawn McKnight".

The Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight, S.T.D.  
Bishop of Jefferson City

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Constance Schepers".

Mrs. Constance Schepers  
Chancellor