



ARCHDIOCESE  
OF  
SAINT PAUL &  
MINNEAPOLIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

December 1, 2021

Dear Fathers,

I write today with gratitude for how you have patiently and tirelessly attended to the spiritual and temporal needs of so many during this pandemic, and continue to do so. Many of you have served at great risk to your own health and personal wellness. In fact, just last week, seven of our clergy brothers tested positive for COVID and were in quarantine. This is the highest number of infected clergy at one time since the beginning of the pandemic. Please remember them in your prayers.

COVID cases unfortunately seem to be increasing in many counties in the Archdiocese, and some hospital ICUs are strained beyond capacity. In light of the current situation, and out of sensitivity for the parishioners who are again concerned about the spread of COVID-19 in church, I am requesting that you consider taking stronger measures to relieve their fears. In particular, I am asking that you strongly recommend to parishioners coming for Mass or for other large indoor events that they wear facemasks. We are already asked to do this in many retail shops, restaurants, and other places where crowds gather.

Please also continue to look for ways to enable the faithful to physically distance, where possible. I have seen in some of our parishes seating areas designated for those who would like to maintain a wider social distance from fellow parishioners. It may also be helpful to continue offering overflow seating in auxiliary spaces that are linked by video feed, or parking lot Masses or the opportunity for Mass participation via radio broadcast or livestream with drive-up Communion. I know those who are able to receive our Lord in these alternate ways are very appreciative of your efforts, as am I.

In these first days of Advent, please join me in praying for an end to the pandemic and for the comfort of those who have lost loved ones. Let us also pray for the safety of those serving in medical fields, who are daily risking their own health—and that of their loved ones. May God protect, strengthen, and reward them.

Our Lady, Comfort of the Afflicted and Mother of the Church, pray for us.

Fraternally in Christ,

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis