



Very Reverend Daniel B. Carson

Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia

Dear Brother Priest,

I write today to provide you with updates. I will continue to keep you informed as we navigate this challenging time.

State of Maryland Capacity Limits

Beginning Friday at 5 p.m., under Governor Hogan's [new executive order](#), state capacity limits will be removed for religious facilities in Maryland. The governor's order nullifies all previous orders issued by local counties, meaning that the State is no longer imposing any limits on Mass attendance starting this weekend. The governor's order also removed the capacity limits that had applied to other indoor or outdoor parish gatherings. We understand that certain counties, including specifically Montgomery and Prince George's, are considering whether to impose their own restrictions under local law, which may impact Mass capacity and other parish gatherings. We are continuing to monitor these issues, and further information will be provided when it is available.

Although the State and county limits on building capacity are lifted, the Archdiocesan guidelines have not changed and remain as set forth in the document entitled, *Public Celebration of Mass and Holy Communion Outside of Mass* (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)). In particular, facilities will still need to maintain masking and six-foot social distancing rules, as well as follow all other Archdiocesan guidelines. This will necessarily limit the number of people that a parish can accommodate for indoor gatherings at any one time.

The Maryland Department of Health has also issued a [new order](#) providing that, at that time, COVID testing and isolation for travel will no longer be required, but only advisory recommendations.

Confirmation of Catholics at the Easter Vigil

With regard to Catholics who are to be confirmed at the Easter Vigil, pastors and parish administrators have been delegated to administer Confirmation to Catholics within their parish boundaries; this broad delegation, though given because of the pandemic due to the difficulty of having normal Confirmations,

applies as well to the Easter Vigil and to other times. Please see **here** for the decree issued on May 29, 2020 that remains in effect.

However, if Catholics are to be confirmed by other priests (parochial vicars, residents, or visitors); these priests must receive delegation through the Office of Canonical Services (OCS). This delegation is required for the valid administration of the sacrament.

Confirmations done with special delegation, either by pastors and administrators, or by other priests through the OCS, should be noted in the Confirmation register among the annotations (e.g., "With delegation.).

As for the unbaptized and baptized non-Catholics, by the law itself and the faculties of the Archdiocese, priests have the faculty to administer Confirmation to those persons whom they baptize or receive into full communion with the Catholic Church, and indeed they must use this faculty (cann. 866, 883 2°, 885 §2; ADW faculties for priests, nn. 1 and 2).

The Feast of Saint Joseph and Friday Abstinence

The Feast of Saint Joseph, March 19th, is a solemnity in the Church calendar. Since it falls on a Friday of Lent this year, there is no obligation to abstain from meat on that day. No dispensation is necessary because the exception is contained within the law itself (can. 1251).

Archdiocese To Continue Funding Flocknote For All Parishes for Fiscal Year 2022

In 2018, the archdiocese began a partnership with Flocknote, offering this email and texting communication tool to parishes. As was communicated in 2018, the archdiocese was to cover the first year costs as we explored how parishes might incorporate this tool into their communications and outreach. The program has proven very successful, with nearly 100 parishes and their ministries now using the tool to more effectively connect with parishioners. In 2020 alone, ADW parishes sent nearly 3.5 million emails and 780,000 texts to 92,000 people using Flocknote. This tool has proven beneficial in informing parishioners as we navigate the pandemic and the continued efforts to encourage the return to Mass.

We are pleased to announce that the archdiocese will continue paying for this program on behalf of all parishes, in full, for fiscal year 2022.

The Flocknote program is not changing otherwise, so you will still receive assistance and diocesan support from the Flocknote support team as needed, as well as guidance on best practices from the Secretariat for Communications and the Secretariat for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns. Other benefits you will continue to receive include the ability to send unlimited texts and emails, training and onboarding for all parish staff, access to images and messages in the content library, and safe environment compliance for your parish communications.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Flocknote training or onboarding is available free of charge to your parish staff and volunteers. Contact diocese@flocknote.com for assistance. Tutorials and FAQs can be found at help.flocknote.com.
- For further information about Flocknote and for additional communications resources, contact Jaclyn Lippelmann, Director of Digital Media, at lippelmanj@adw.org.
- The Office of Digital Media has created a website with tools, tips and free graphics to assist you in your parish communications. Visit the site at digital.adw.org.
- If you are interested in learning more about how to use Flocknote to increase parishioner engagement and outreach, contact Jonathan Lewis, Assistant Secretary for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns at lewisj@adw.org.

2019-2020 Annual Statistical Report

Thank you to the parishes that have already completed the 2019-2020 Annual Statistical Report. I am resending the notice below because we have not heard from several parishes. If you have not already completed this task, I ask that you make it a priority to submit your parish's Annual Statistical Report no later than Friday, March 12, 2021.

Please forward this email to the member of your staff that will assist you with completing this report. The Statistical Report to be completed can be found **HERE**.

Remind the Faithful of Information on the Website

The archdiocesan website is updated regularly. Please see adw.org/coronavirus for information related to the coronavirus, adw.org/live-streamed-masses-and-prayers/ for a listing of live stream Masses and prayers, and cathstan.org and elpreg.org for the *Catholic Standard* and the Spanish-language *El Pregonero* newspapers.

As always, should you have questions or need assistance from my office and the Pastoral Center, please let us know.

With gratitude for your priestly ministry, I am
Sincerely in Christ,
Very Reverend Daniel B. Carson
Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia