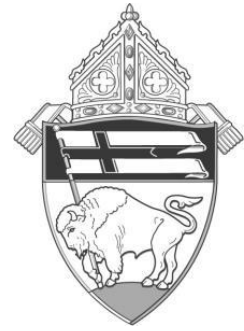

Diocese of Buffalo

Office of Communications



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 19, 2020

Diocese to Implement Precautions During COVID-19 Resurge

(Buffalo, NY) – Adhering to the State of New York public health guidelines to mitigate the risks of the Covid-19 resurgence throughout Western New York, the Diocese of Buffalo will implement the Department of Health guidelines for public gatherings and places of worship for all parishes, effective Friday, November 20, 2020. The dispensation from the obligation of Catholics to attend Mass on Sunday and on other Holy Days of Obligation remains in effect.

Several parishes of the Diocese in Erie County and in parts of Niagara County are currently in either the Yellow or Orange zone. The guidelines are as follows:

- **YELLOW** zone: maximum 50% capacity for worship, adhering to six-foot social distancing requirements, for all other gatherings a maximum of 25 people (non-residential) or 10 (residential);
- **ORANGE** zone: gatherings not to exceed the LESSER of 33% or 25 people for worship, which means that most parishes will only be able to welcome a maximum of 25 people for Mass.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Diocese has consistently sought to follow the directives of public health officials and remains committed to doing its part to mitigate the severe threat that the virus continues to pose, particularly among those most vulnerable.

There are now 250,000 who have succumbed to the virus in the United States alone, and while some may view the current restrictions as an issue of religious liberty or “Church vs. State,” the Diocese acknowledges this legitimate public health threat and the need to adhere to limits on public gatherings. Motivated by our concern for human life at all stages, and our care and concern for one another and those most vulnerable, these guidelines, while disappointing for many, are temporary measures to aid in reducing the infection rate across Western New York.

Those whose parishes will be unable to provide in-person liturgies are encouraged to check their parish website for information on live-streamed liturgies. A list of available live-streamed liturgies is available at: [LIVE STREAM MASSES](#)

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