



OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

A ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

1908 Waleska Highway 108 • Jasper, Georgia 30143 • USA

706-253-3078 • www.olmjasper.com

Dear parishioners,

December 18, 2020

We simply cannot anticipate what may happen at our upcoming festivities marking the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord. Christmas is a time when people come in from out of town, and when folks who have not been to Mass in months can suddenly decide to come to church. Many of the people in our pews at these Masses are not parishioners. Now, Covid-19 could change all of this, though it is difficult to guess how. We are told that crowded church services are potential super-spreader events, and these Masses could become very crowded. At the request of the Archdiocese, we have added an extra Christmas Eve Mass to the schedule so that folks can potentially spread out more. In years past, the first Christmas Eve Mass has always been the most crowded, so now we have three Masses.

My advice to everyone is first, if you come, please wear a mask (in compliance with the regulations of the Archdiocese). When you refuse to wear your mask, your pastor is the one who folks call to complain to, putting me in an impossible position.

Second, know that we could end up not being able to social distance as much as normal (as these Masses could be crowded). So, you must accept a level of personal responsibility in this. If you are not feeling well, then please stay home.

Third, if your family normally comes to the 4:00 p.m. Mass (this year 4:30 p.m.) please take into consideration, that this is usually the most crowded. If your last names begin with A-M, then consider coming to

the 2:00 p.m. Mass, and if your names begin with N-Z, then consider coming to the 4:30 p.m. Mass. This may help spread us out. The latest Christmas Eve Mass and the Christmas morning Mass are usually not crowded, so if you are elderly, consider one of those Masses.

Certainly, you might want to get here early, because at some point our ushers may have no choice but to stop letting people in. Again, we just cannot anticipate how crowded these Masses may be.

Note that we will have no Carol Service this year.

Fourth, know that the Archbishop is still dispensing us from Holy Days of Obligation, so you do not have to come to Christmas Mass if you are in anyway uncomfortable doing so, or if you are in a high-risk category. There are beautiful Masses televised at Christmas, so the safest option is to stay home (though we will miss you, of course).

Lastly, keep in mind that Christmas (for Catholics) is a season and not just a single day. If you are anxious about coming for Christmas Masses, because they may be too crowded, then you can still come with your family to Mass on another day during the season of Christmas.

And one more thing, I am very grateful to God that we have not had any massive outbreaks of Covid-19 at Our Lady of the Mountains, and I am very grateful to our parishioners for your spirit of cooperation in all of this. God bless you all, and have a Merry Christmas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Byrd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end.