



DIOCESE OF BUFFALO
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

October 12, 2022

Dear Fathers and Pastoral Administrators:

The season of autumn is in full swing as the fall colors abound but I am certain you are already thinking and planning for the upcoming seasons of Advent and Christmas. They will be upon us before we know it.

I am aware that two years ago, due to the pandemic, permission was granted for an additional Vigil Mass of Christmas to occur before 4:00 pm but not any earlier than 2:00 pm. The situation, necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, created a true pastoral need. Last year, with a lack of vaccines for a majority of the population and still a great deal of uncertainty, the same permission was again extended.

This year, however, the situation is different. Vaccines and boosters are readily available and in so many cases, people have returned or are trying to return to a “normal” schedule while still taking precautions. Therefore, after consultation with the College of Consultors and the Presbyteral Council, I have decided not to grant permission for Vigil Masses to occur before 4:00 p.m. on December 24th.

Parishes are encouraged, if pastorally necessary, to offer additional Vigil Masses on December 24th after 4:00 pm and/or Masses on Christmas Day.

I pray that the Holy Spirit be with and guide you and your parish’s team in planning prayerful celebrations focusing on the great joy of Christ’s birth. Asking God’s blessing upon you to be strengthened by the *Real Presence*, *Real Hope*, and *Real Mission* of Christ, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael W. Fisher
Bishop of Buffalo