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MEMORANDUM

To: All Priests of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

From: Fr. Zachary Boazman, Associate Director of the Secretariat for Divine Worship

Date: October 13, 2023

Re: Christmas Masses

My Brother Priests,

The liturgical year is coming to a close quickly, and soon we will begin a new year with the season of Advent.

As you are aware, this year we celebrate Christmas on a Monday. Because of this, many of you likely have questions regarding how to schedule the Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Advent which falls on December 24, Christmas Eve.

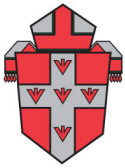
While every parish will have to determine how to best schedule their Masses for the benefit of the faithful, keep in mind the Code of Canon Law places a limit on the number of Masses a priest may celebrate. (cf. CIC 905, Archdiocesan Priest Faculties)

Note for Sunday, December 24:

A priest is not permitted to celebrate more than 3 total Masses in one calendar day (12:00 Midnight to 11:59pm). Therefore, three Masses on Sunday December 24 is the limit, regardless if it is a Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent or for The Nativity of The Lord (Christmas).

Unlike some Holy Days of Obligation in the United States, the obligation to attend Mass on Christmas is not automatically dispensed when Christmas falls on a Monday. Therefore, there are two obligations for the faithful to attend Mass: on Sunday, December 24 for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and on Monday, December 25 for the Nativity of The Lord (Christmas).

The first obligation (Fourth Sunday of Advent) is fulfilled by going to *any Mass* from 4pm on December 23 to 11:59pm on December 24. The second obligation (Christmas) is fulfilled by going to *any Mass* from 4pm on December 24 to 11:59pm on December 25.



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The prevailing opinion of most canon lawyers is that both obligations may not be fulfilled by going to a single Mass but must be fulfilled by going to two separate Masses. However, this opinion is not definitive, and such a canonical doubt must be taken into consideration in pastoral guidance, especially in the confessional.

As pastors charged with leading the faithful into the mysteries of Christ through the radiant medium of the Sacred Liturgy, let us prepare and encourage those entrusted to our care to appropriately celebrate these holy days with great expectation and joy! If you need any further clarification or assistance, please contact the Secretariat for Divine Worship.

In Christ,

Fr. Zak Boazman
Associate Director