



# Memo

**Date:** November 9, 2020  
**To:** Pastors  
**From:** The Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.  
**Re:** Scheduling of Christmas Eve Masses

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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Peace and all good things!

The COVID-19 is the new Grinch and he will not steal Christmas in 2020!

We have received a notice from the Committee of Divine Worship of the USCCB and states that “The Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance is of the opinion that, particularly in this time of pandemic, a diocesan bishop can give a broad interpretation to what constitutes ‘evening.’ In doing so, he may choose to permit Christmas Eve Masses to be celebrated earlier than 4 p.m. However, given the common interpretation of ‘evening’ under normal circumstances, any permission this year because of COVID-19 might be considered exceptional.”

As a result of this exception, a pastor or administrator may schedule Christmas Vigil Masses throughout the day on Thursday, December 24. This permission is granted only for this Christmas Eve in 2020. Needless to say, you will need to schedule a sufficient number of Christmas Eve and Christmas Masses to accommodate your people. Sunday Masses can be scheduled as usual. All parishes should continue to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines including social distancing and wearing masks at these liturgies.

At this point, the suspension of the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days remains in effect.

I am [attaching](#) the memorandum for the full explanation of the Committee on Divine Worship.

With prayerful best wishes,

Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.