



MEDIA ADVISORY – For Immediate Release

**Archdiocese of Toronto Welcomes Catholics for Christmas
Masses at Full Capacity for the First Time Since December 2019**

*225 Catholic Churches invite GTA Catholics to celebrate the birth of Jesus –
a time for joy, peace and hope!*

TORONTO, ON (December 22, 2022) – Catholic churches throughout the Archdiocese of Toronto are preparing to welcome parishioners for Christmas Masses at full capacity and without mandatory masking and distancing for the first time since Christmas of 2019. This comes following two years of modified Christmas services at parishes due to pandemic restrictions that limited attendance to 30 per cent capacity last year, and no more than 10 people at any one time for Christmas services in 2020.

Throughout the pandemic, clergy, parish staff and volunteers provided extensive outreach, from phone calls to distanced personal visits and virtual meetings, offering spiritual support and pastoral care as the community grappled with the challenges of a global pandemic.

The [Archdiocese of Toronto website](#) provides links to each parish website along with appropriate contact information. Parishioners are encouraged to check with their parish website in advance as Mass times vary and some parishes offer additional Masses at Christmas time.

At St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica, the mother church of the archdiocese, Cardinal Thomas Collins will preside at midnight Mass and noon Mass on Christmas Day. The world renowned, St. Michael's Choir School, will provide music for Christmas celebrations, including carols on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Schedule at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica (65 Bond St., Toronto):

Christmas Eve - Saturday, December 24

- 5 p.m. – Mass with Celebrant and Homilist Fr. Frank Portelli
- 7:15 p.m. – Carols with St. Michael's Choir School
- 8 p.m. – Mass with Celebrant and Homilist Fr. Adam Pantaleo
- 11:15 p.m. – Carols with St. Michael's Choir School
- 12 a.m. – Midnight Mass with Celebrant and Homilist Cardinal Thomas Collins

Christmas Day - Sunday, December 25

- 8 a.m. – Mass with Celebrant and Homilist Fr. Alphonsus Bernard
- 9:15 a.m. – Carols with Cathedral Vespers Choir
- 10 a.m. – Mass with Celebrant and Homilist Fr. Frank Portelli
- 12 p.m. – Noon Mass with Celebrant and Homilist Cardinal Thomas Collins

The Archdiocese of Toronto is one of the most diverse faith communities in North America, serving as the spiritual home to two million Catholics, celebrating Mass in more than 30 languages each week at 225 parishes. It is Canada's largest diocese, stretching from Toronto north to Georgian Bay and from Oshawa to Mississauga.

- 30 -

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****Please note: Working media are permitted at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica. We ask that you connect with media contacts in advance of arrival.****

Please see attached photos for publication:

01 St. Michael Cathedral Basilica.jpg – “St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica in downtown Toronto is fully decorated and ready for Catholics to celebrate Christmas Mass at full capacity for the first time since 2019. (Photo courtesy of the Archdiocese of Toronto)”

02 St. Michael Cathedral Basilica.jpg – “St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica in downtown Toronto is fully decorated and ready for Catholics to celebrate Christmas Mass at full capacity for the first time since 2019. (Photo courtesy of the Archdiocese of Toronto)”

03 St. Michael Cathedral Basilica.jpg – “The nativity scene at St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica in downtown Toronto where Catholics will celebrate Christmas Mass at full capacity for the first time since 2019. (Photo courtesy of the Archdiocese of Toronto)”

04 Prayer For Christmas.jpg – Prayer composed by Fr. Adam Pantaleo, Associate Priest at St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica in Toronto. (Courtesy of Archdiocese of Toronto)