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**MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA'S
OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
REGARDING THIS WEEKEND'S WINTER STORM AND SUNDAY MASS**

This weekend's winter storm will be a hardship for many in our area. Additionally, severe winter weather typically causes anxiety for Christians with regard to their Sunday duties. Catholics, for the most part, take seriously their obligation to assist at Mass on the Lord's Day. So, a snow storm, and especially one like the blizzard expected this weekend, causes great concern for both priests and the faithful about attendance at Sunday Mass.

No one can dispense from the divine law, and in this case, the Third Commandment to keep holy the Lord's Day. However, individuals because of a variety of legitimate circumstances, for example, sickness and poor health, can and do excuse themselves from the obligations of this same Commandment, without offending God and incurring any serious sin. In the face of the impending storm, Catholics—of all ages but especially the elderly—are advised to use extreme caution when making the decision about attending Mass. An individual is free to make a prudent decision to remain at home and not venture outside this Sunday, especially for their safety and the safety of others. Pastors throughout the Archdiocese will maintain as much as possible the regular Sunday Mass schedule for those who are able to attend Mass.

Sunday remains the Lord's Day even when an individual cannot attend Mass. These individuals are encouraged to view the Mass on television, if possible. Also, reading the Word of God, especially the biblical readings for Sunday, easily found on the internet, praying the Holy Rosary, and/or making use of other devotional prayers could take place in the home to keep in a fitting way the Lord's Day.

Let us pray for all those who for the safety and well-being of others must brave the storm and for all those negatively impacted by the bad weather with confidence in the Mercy of the Lord.

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