



Memo from the Bishop

Number 86 ✕ December 22, 2020

PRESENT COUNTY TIER / REGION STATUS:

ALL Counties of the Diocese - Stay at **Tier 1** - Outdoor only with masks and social distancing.

Napa and Sonoma Counties are now linked with an area known as the Bay Area Region.

Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte are identified with the Northern California Region.

NEWS! GOVERNOR UPDATE: The Governor has not moved to allow Churches any form of indoor worship and so it appears that we are to maintain our outdoor only status until further notice. In Sonoma County the Health Officer indicated that the present Shelter in Place order will most likely continue through January. I imagine that the other Counties of the Diocese are in a similar lock down mode.

COURT RAMIFICATIONS: I attach an article describing the nature of Harvest Church challenge to the Governor's Order and the decision of the judge. The request was that Churches be treated as other large spaces, such as Big Box Stores, but the judge determined that it is more appropriate to compare churches to theatres and concert halls and since these are closed it is 'fair' to close churches as well. It seems that any concept of a 'right to worship' was not even considered.

CHRISTMAS: I can only hope that you and your people all do the best you can to assure that your parish has the opportunity to experience the joy and grace of this Christmas Season. While restrained from being indoors we must remember that this is a most solemn and sacred time and must therefore make the most of our outdoor gatherings. Perhaps, in some odd way, this will be the Christmas that all will remember. I do hope that parents bring their children. The experience of Christmas outdoors, while painful and difficult for us, may, in the hearts of children serve as a type of Christmas adventure. I have every confidence that you will make this Christmas, despite the challenges, one which is both joy-filled and memorable.

LAST BULLETIN FOR 2020: This MAY be the last bulletin for this year and so I take the opportunity to wish all of you a most joyful Christmas Season and New Year. The challenges we faced in 2020 will, in many ways, continue into 2021 but we will persevere together. God bless you and thank you for all that you continue to do for the sake of your people and for the good of the Church.

PERSEVERE! BE SAFE! God bless you for all your efforts for the sake of souls during these most trying times.