

---

## **Lithuania: the bishops decide to stop Masses. A choice that was “very difficult but that however should not deprive us of the joy of Christmas”**

“Given the seriousness of the situation that has affected us and the restrictions announced by the local authorities, we decided to stop public worship in the churches from 16th December to 3rd January”. This can be read in a release written by the “Lithuanian bishops” and posted on the website of the Episcopal Conference. “Our unity, solidarity and mutual respect are particularly important”, this is the reason provided by the bishops, who announce that “the churches will stay open so that devotees can pray in private, go to Confession and receive Communion as agreed” with the priests, who “will serve in the churches or in the parishes and will receive the devotees”. As last spring, “we call believers to join the Masses broadcast on TVs, radios or on the Internet”. For funeral services, Mass will be only officiated with the closest relatives. “We realise that this is a very difficult decision”, the release goes on, “however it should not deprive us of the joy and peace of Christmas. Even if this year’s Christmas is lived in an unexpected manner, it joins us to the Holy Family, that went through very hard trials on the way to Bethlehem”. And then: “This Christmas calls us to proclaim God’s glory in a unique way: to concretely take care of human life. Not necessarily family life, but still close to us”.

Gigliola Alfaro