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## **Slovakia: bishops invite to responsible behaviour during Christmas and to vaccination**

(Bratislava) – In the run-up to Christmas, we are invited to frugality and prayer, Msgr. Stanislav Zvolenský, president of the Bishops' Conference of Slovakia, affirms in his Advent message. As he says, the Lord's coming announced by the Gospel calls for our constant cooperation with Him and for the opening of our hearts. "In the midst of dramatic events in the world and society or in the midst of the desert of indifference and practical materialism, Christians receive the gift of salvation from God and are supposed to testify to it through their way of life that should be above average", the message reads. The Archbishop emphasises that the community of believers should be "a living sign of God's love and justice". Last Christmas, all Churches in Slovakia were closed due to pandemic restrictions. This year, the rules will be less strict in this regard, despite the intensification of the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Bishops' Conference welcomes the government's decision to ease restrictions for the forthcoming Christmas celebrations but invites the faithful to behave with the highest responsibility and considerateness. All Slovak Bishops recently prepared a joint declaration on vaccination. "Let us be courageous and take this step out of love for our neighbours, the weak and the vulnerable. It is a concrete and mature demonstration of our faith in God, as well as an expression of conscious and consistent commitment to life", the document reads.

Danka Jaceckova