



DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

McRaith Catholic Center | *Office of the Bishop*

May 15, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

After consultation with the bishops of the state of Kentucky, medical personnel, clergy and diocesan leaders, I am happy to announce to you that I am granting permission for **the public celebration of the Mass in the Diocese of Owensboro to resume on May 20, 2020.**

I must temper this announcement, however, with the caution that this is not going to be a return to normal. Masses are beginning in a limited manner and with the exercise of great caution. The pandemic is far from over and precautions must be taken to protect one another. Among other things, these precautions will include physical distancing and the wearing of face masks.

In order to maintain physical distancing, it is necessary to limit the number of people who attend each Mass. Occupancy is limited to 33% of each church's capacity. Pastors will determine how this will be accomplished in their parish. It is possible that, at some point, the limit may be reached and those who arrive after that time cannot be accommodated. If this does occur, I ask for your understanding.

It is likely that some of our parishes will not be able to begin celebrating Mass on May 20 either because of the health or age of the pastor or because the parish is not able to meet the guidelines for reopening to public worship. It will be important for you to check your parish website or social media or call the parish office to determine if and when Mass will be offered and how to attend.

Because of the continued threat of COVID-19 and the limited access to Mass, I have chosen to extend the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist. The dispensation will continue until further notice. Therefore, those who wish to participate in Mass may do so by attending any Mass that is celebrated on any day of the week.

I know that this time of fasting from the Eucharist has been terribly difficult. However, I am grateful to you for understanding that all precautions have been taken out of Christian charity in an effort to protect the most vulnerable. I would ask that as you pray about whether you should return to the public celebration of Mass at this time, consider what is in your best interest and also, from an attitude of Christian charity, consider what is in the best interest of others as well.

Please do not put yourself or others at risk by attending Mass. Those who are elderly, vulnerable or ill should continue to worship from home.

As we approach the great solemnity of Pentecost, please join me in praying to the Holy Spirit for the gifts needed to continue to meet the challenges of these days. May God continue to bless you with Easter joy and peace!

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend William F. Medley
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro