



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

240 E. ONONDAGA STREET, SYRACUSE, NY 13202-2608

Dear Diocesan Family,

May 22, 2020

Greetings in the Lord! I write you today to let you know that the resumption of public worship in the Diocese of Syracuse will be next weekend, the Solemnity of Pentecost. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we have travelled and continue to travel in uncharted waters!

As of this past Wednesday, May 20th, gatherings of ten people or less are now permitted for public worship. The previous executive order permitted churches to remain open for private prayer, allowing no more than ten people to be present at a given time. Our diocesan instructions and protocols have permitted the celebration of Mass with necessary ministers and parish staff. We allowed also continued access to the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Matrimony, and Anointing of the Sick as well as the ability to offer Funeral rites.

Now, I am happy to be able to permit the celebration of Mass either in parking lots at fifty percent capacity, with the faithful remaining in their cars or inside churches with no more than ten people. However, we do expect this number to change and we'll update you if it happens. In any event, Masses may be celebrated in parking lots and in churches beginning Pentecost Sunday, including the Saturday evening Vigil (May 30-31st). Moreover, I am happy to be able to permit the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation as well as the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance at regularly scheduled times.

I ask for your continued patience and understanding because each parish may not be able or ready to offer the public celebration of Mass in this way. However, all must read *Instructions for the Celebration of the Sacraments When Public Gatherings Resume*; create a legitimate plan that follows these instructions; and then fill out and return the *Requirements for the Resumption of Public Worship: Parish Pandemic Form* for approval.

I also ask for your flexibility because another outbreak of COVID-19 may require us to temporarily close again or to alter our current instructions and protocols. This is the reason for us not opening our doors on Memorial Day Weekend. Access to the celebration of the Sacraments in a safe and healthy way is my number one priority at this time. This week, I will meet with the priests of each region via ZOOM to discuss the upcoming resumption of public gatherings for worship and to answer any questions they may have.

Again, I do want to remind everyone that the Faithful will remain dispensed from the Sunday Obligation to attend mass until further notice. Please continue to visit our diocesan website for information and updates (www.syrdio.org). Be assured of my prayers and I am grateful for yours as well.

In the Name of Jesus,

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse

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