



OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

Pastoral Center, 3940 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY 40213-1463
(502) 585-3291 | (502) 585-2466 (Fax) | archbishop@archlou.org

May 11, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am very pleased to be able to issue the archdiocesan plan for reopening our parishes for public liturgies, including the Mass. Alleluia!

At the same time, I am aware that many among us will not be able to come back to Church because of age, infirmity, or other vulnerabilities. In addition, social distancing requirements will reduce seating capacity for parishes. To those who will not be able to attend, please know that we are united as a Body of Christ and that you are with us in spirit and prayer. I have encouraged parishes to continue to offer live-streamed and recorded Masses, and we will maintain our listing of these offerings at www.archlou.org/COVID-19 so that all can join their parishes or another parish virtually.

I am issuing a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation for the Archdiocese of Louisville, until further notice. Anyone who is sick or living with someone who is sick should stay home, as should those who feel vulnerable for any other reason.

In addition, parishes that cannot open safely and incorporate the directives and guidelines I have provided should delay reopening. I ask for everyone's patience as pastors discern the best way forward. Please keep in mind that many of our pastors are themselves vulnerable to this virus and may wish to delay for that reason. Please respect your pastor's decision and if your parish cannot reopen safely, avail yourself of liturgies at other parishes.

Parishes that can open safely for public liturgies may begin doing so on Wednesday, May 20. The ability to implement social distancing and hygiene best practices is essential.

We also are asking all parishioners who attend Mass to wear a mask or face covering. I know that many find this a burden, but our call as Catholics is to promote the common good. We know that persons who are not experiencing symptoms may carry and spread the COVID-19 virus, and this measure protects those people with whom you come in contact.

As we begin this new phase in the midst of this terrible illness, please keep in your prayers all who are sick, those who have died and their families, healthcare professionals, first responders, and our civic leaders who must make very difficult decisions in uncertain circumstances.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.
Archbishop of Louisville