



Diocese of Rockford

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Office of the Bishop

June 1, 2020

Dear Monsignor/Father,

In my letter to you of May 29, 2020, I indicated that further guidance would be sent to you this week following the issuance on May 28, 2020, by the Illinois Department of Public Health, of the new “Guidance for Places of Worship and Providers of Religious Services.” With this letter, I am communicating to you the next step in our process.

Effective with the Masses for the weekend of June 6–7, parishes that have already been certified and which have celebrated for at least one week Masses in the presence of the 10 faithful, may increase the number of faithful present to a number not to exceed 30% of the seating capacity of the parish church. The actual number of the faithful who can be accommodated in each church will vary from that maximum number in order to faithfully implement the necessary spacing for social distancing.

If a parish is not able to meet the conditions outlined in the initial checklist for certification or, in the judgment of the pastor, is not yet ready to do so, it must not reopen Mass in the presence of the faithful at this time. Continuing observance of all the directives of “Back in His Presence” is of course a condition for continued offering of the Mass with the faithful. Attached please find a copy of that document for your convenience and review.

At this time, in addition to the celebration of Mass in the presence of the faithful under these conditions, especially to accommodate vulnerable individuals who do not come to Mass or others who could not get a place at Mass, parishes that have been certified may hold services for the distribution of Holy Communion outside of Mass. This can only be done in church and in strict conformity to the relevant guidelines of “Back in His Presence.”

If you have questions or need assistance in this process please direct your inquiries to reopen@rockforddiocese.org.

Again, brothers, I ask for your support and your leadership with the faithful as we progress through this ongoing health crisis. Please join me in praying for God’s guidance for ourselves and for the faithful as we seek to return to the regular and public celebration of the sacraments.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *David J. Malloy*

Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Bishop of Rockford

Attachment