



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

May 19, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is with great joy that I write to you today to announce a date for resuming public Masses and liturgies in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. **Beginning Friday, May 29 parishes may resume these celebrations if they are prepared.** I have considered the advice of doctors in West Michigan, public health officials, and the diocesan staff in making decisions throughout this pandemic. I am grateful for their insight and consultation.

These past few months have required significant sacrifice. I am grateful to our pastors and their parish staffs who kept our churches open and worked to support the faithful through this time. Through it all, we have continued to bear witness to Jesus Christ through new methods of evangelization and outreach, through the sacraments, and prayer. I thank you for your patience and for showing your love of neighbor during this pandemic. This crisis has provided us a golden opportunity to freshen up our “yes” to God and to enrich the Domestic Church through our time together.

Reopening will proceed carefully and in phases. The diocese has provided detailed guidance to our pastors. The logistics for how these directives will be implemented will be different for each parish. Please watch your parish website or social media for up to date information, or call the parish office. A quick overview of diocesan directives may be found [here](#).

All Catholics within the territory of the Diocese of Grand Rapids are granted a dispensation from their obligation of attending Sunday Mass through June 30. We recommend people stay at home if they are considered vulnerable due to age (over 60) or underlying health conditions. If you are sick, please stay home. Though the dispensation remains, our obligation to keep holy the Lord’s Day is of utmost importance to our continued faith life. Mass will continue to be televised at 10 a.m. Sunday on FOX 17 and livestreamed on the diocesan website (grdiocese.org) and Facebook page ([Diocese of Grand Rapids](#)).

Please approach this reopening phase with patience and caution. We want the reopening to be successful so that we do not have to suspend public Masses again. The risks of COVID-19 remain and we must follow these regulations to safeguard the health of everyone in our community. Please continue to check the diocesan website: <http://bit.ly/GRdioceseCOVID19Updates> and social media for the latest information on our COVID-19 response.

Let us pray for each other, for the sick and deceased, for their families, and for all frontline workers and officials who are working to protect us and restore our communities to good health. We entrust these prayers to the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, patroness of those who suffer illness.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids