



Diocese of Madison

702 S. High Point Rd.
Suite 225
Madison, WI 53719
Phone (608) 821-3033

May 22, 2020

Catholic Churches in Diocese of Madison to reopen at 25% capacity Pentecost Weekend

MADISON — The weekend of Pentecost (May 30 – 31) Catholic Churches throughout the 11-county Diocese of Madison will resume public Masses, limited to 25% of each church's occupancy capacity, with adequate social distancing, and numerous safeguards in place.

In his communication with priests of the diocese, Bishop Donald Hying laid out his rationale for this approach, saying, *"Given the lifting of civil restrictions in most counties of our diocese, some may ask why we are adopting a gradual approach to reinstating Masses with significant congregations present. The answer lies in the fact that COVID-19 cases continue to emerge in the state and there is still a very real danger of infection without adequate care; therefore, we want to be prudent in light of public health concerns. To simply emerge from these weeks of physical distancing without any gradualism would be irresponsible. Our hope is that our elderly and at-risk faithful people will exercise prudence and not yet attend Mass, especially given the current dispensation from the Sunday obligation, but we do want to begin enabling others to participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the central experience of Catholicism, which we have all sorely missed in these challenging weeks of the pandemic."*

Other practical safeguards that will put in place and strongly encouraged, as we resume public Masses include:

- Continue to obey all applicable local restrictions;
- Recommend that the faithful gathered wear face masks;
- No choir or congregational singing;
- Frequent sanitation of surfaces, as well as frequent hand washing/sanitizing;
- Removal of hymnals, missalettes, and other items in the pews;
- Continuation of the streaming of Masses live online, and
- Increased signage and direction from trained ushers.

The Diocese of Madison is comprised of 11 counties in south-central Wisconsin, with rural and urban, large and small parishes throughout. In remaining in compliance with county and municipal orders, liturgies and worship will look different in nearly every one of our 134 churches.

###