



Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana

Office of the Bishop
610 Lingle Ave., Lafayette, IN 47901-1740
PO Box 260, Lafayette, IN 47902-0260
(765) 742-0275 FAX: (765) 742-7513
bishopdoherty@dol-in.org

Letter for reopening weekend, May 30-31, 2020

Dear Members of Our Diocesan Catholic Faithful,

While our return to public worship will be limited this Pentecost Sunday, I am warmed by the thought of gathering again for worship in our own pews. As you already know, our reopening is going to be gradual and informed by interest in the public health and the common good.

Parish leaders have received the guidelines for reopening, and these have been published online. Guidelines among dioceses are similar, but each differs in specifics. I request that we can act in supportive and prayerful solidarity, even when opinions differ on the best way to proceed.

Our reopening does not mean an immediate return of all of our worship, sacramental, and social practices. Items basic to our advisories are:

- Anyone who has fever symptoms should stay home
- Communion in the hand is what we are asking out of charity for our extraordinary ministers, the next people in procession, and our clergy
- Necessary social distancing between people of different households means that numbers admitted for a single Mass may be limited
- An expectation that worshippers will wear face masks
- Mass will be briefer
- People will not congregate before or after Mass inside or outside church

The precautions that we exercise are not expressions of fearfulness, but of love of neighbor and care for the vulnerable. It is understood that churches will take care to observe a standard of cleanness, but are not able to provide a sterile environment.

The dispensation from the obligation to participate in Sunday worship applies to everyone until August 15. In any case, illness automatically dispenses a person from this obligation. Livestreaming of Masses will continue.

Our self-imposed limitations are temporary and subject to periodic updating. Until we can gather more freely, trust that Our Lord has always really been present in the reading of Scriptures and in our daily prayers and private devotions.

In Christ,
Bishop Timothy Doherty