



Diocese of Peoria

**Office of the Vicar General
Spalding Pastoral Center
419 N.E. Madison Avenue
Peoria, Illinois 61603**

309-671-1550

7 May 2021

Dear Monsignors and Fathers,

I am writing to give you an update on several items.

Letters of appointment

The letters of appointment have been sent. If you have any questions regarding your letter of appointment, please contact me directly.

Covid-19 restrictions

As you are surely aware, the Governor has announced his plans for the reopening of Illinois and a number of you have asked what that means for us. As I stated in the letter sent to all of you for Holy Week and Easter, "The Bishop has great confidence in the judgment and prudence of his pastors and chaplains in evaluating the needs of the local community and in their ability to adapt liturgical practices to the current moment of the pandemic." As we move forward in our public worship of God toward something that is more recognizable as the "normal way of doing things," we need to keep several things in mind. If the loosening of restrictions outpaces an individual's sense of safety and security, the very things we do to try to get people to return to Mass will have the opposite effect. Fathers of families often endure many things they find tiresome for the sake of their children, and we should be able to endure inconveniences – such as the wearing of a mask – as we encourage our parishioners to move down the road to overcoming unreasonable fear and anxiety. Secondly, the guiding principle that we are following as we move forward is that you observe the recommendations of the CDC. For the present, that means that the expectation is for people to wear masks and observe social distancing. Other things, such as the use of missalettes, the frequency of cleaning the church, etc., will be left up to the judgment of the pastor.

Confirmation

The general mandate to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation that was given by Bishop Jenky to all priests functioning in the Diocese of Peoria expires at the end of the day on Pentecost. Moving forward, you will need permission to receive someone into the Church outside of the Easter Vigil and a mandate to Confirm a previously baptized Catholic. (That mandate is required for validity.)

Dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass

The general dispensation regarding Mass attendance on the Lord's Day remains in place. You can be sure that you will be notified when the dispensation is lifted. It is unlikely that the dispensation will be lifted before the social distancing limitations are no longer in effect.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Monsignor Philip D. Halfacre
Vicar General