



+May 8, 2020

Dear Priests and Parish Leaders,

Blessings upon each of you during this Easter time as we continue to celebrate our Lord's resurrection even in the midst of some ongoing civil restrictions.

This week the governor's office issued new guidance around Phase 1 activities of the Safe Start Washington plan, which included "drive-in spiritual services." Like many of you, we were pleased spiritual services were considered. However, after reviewing the actual guidance, it became clear that "drive-in spiritual services" present many obstacles that could compromise the integrity, sacredness, and reverence of our Catholic worship.

We are taking great care to ensure reverence and respect for the Sacred Liturgy of the Mass – especially the Blessed Sacrament. We explored potential options but the reverent celebration of the Eucharist would be difficult under these guidelines. After consultation with the Presbyteral Council, the overwhelming recommendation was to continue offering Mass by livestream video and to encourage acts of spiritual communion. It is our hope that we can soon experience the freedom to safely gather for worship.

The bishops of Washington are engaging with the governor's office to request greater exercise of religion – especially the ability to gather (with appropriate safeguards) in the sacred space of the church. Please pray for the success of our efforts to secure a greater worship experience while preventing the spread of the coronavirus and protecting the common good.

In light of our desire to celebrate Mass reverently and consistently throughout the archdiocese, our current conversations with civil authorities, and the overwhelmingly strong recommendation of the Presbyteral Council, the archbishop and auxiliary bishops have unanimously decided to postpone any celebration of "drive-in" Masses. As much as we would like to join in community as the Body of Christ in sacred worship, we must be patient as our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has instructed.

Please know that I continue to pray for you and your parish. During the month of May I invite you pray the rosary to help strengthen our communion in the mystical Body of Christ, the Church. This powerful prayer with the intercession of the Blessed Mother are invaluable aids in safeguarding us against the temptations that present themselves in circumstances such as these.

May God bless you during this holy Easter time as we look forward to the day when we will once again publicly gather for the celebration of Mass.

With every best wish and an assurance of prayer, I remain,
Yours in Christ,

+ Daniel Mueggenborg

Most Rev. Daniel H. Mueggenborg