



DIOCESE OF COVINGTON

Office of the Bishop

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13 May 2020

My dear Friends,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Since mid-March our lives and the way we live them have changed dramatically in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. So many people across the world have been making sacrifices they could not have imagined a mere eight weeks ago.

There are people in the medical profession who have literally been risking *their* lives to save the lives of others. There are those who have lost their employment or seen their hours cut to the bone. There are teachers at all levels of the educational spectrum who have had to adapt to teaching in a new way. There are graduates at all levels who will not see the graduation day that they had anticipated.

There are young couples who have looked forward to sharing their wedding day and professing their love for each other with their families and friends who, have found themselves with ten people or fewer attending their wedding because of the safe distancing restrictions placed upon us all for our own good. Priest and deacons who would ordinarily be ordained in the Cathedral with a full church are being ordained with only one or two of their family members present because of the limited number of people who can gather during the pandemic.

There are people who have lost loved ones who, falling prey to the coronavirus, have passed away long before their time. There are those who have died alone without the comfort of their loved ones at their side.

These are just a few examples of how so many are continuing to sacrifice during this time. Each has made this sacrifice in order to protect their lives and the lives of their loved ones.

People of faith have also been sacrificing in not being able to worship as a community of faith and, in our case, have not been able to partake of the Eucharist and the other sacraments. I have received many impassioned letters from our faithful expressing their deep desire to participate once again especially in the Holy Mass and receive the Eucharist which is the "source and summit of the Christian life." (*Lumen Gentium*, #36) These letters, always respectful, have at one and the same time made me both sad and happy. Sad, because I know how earnestly our people have desired to attend Holy Mass and were not able to do so. And, happy because I realize how important the Eucharist is to our faithful and their desire to receive the Eucharist demonstrates their belief in the Real Presence.

It gives me great pleasure to announce to you that beginning on 20 May we will be able to resume daily and Sunday public Masses. Now, we must realize that we are simply not able to go back to the way things were in mid March. This pandemic is real. Its effects are real. Over 1.3 million people in our country have contracted the virus and over 80,000 people have died because of it. So, we must take the necessary precautions to resume our public worship responsibly.

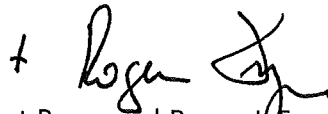
To that end we have issued and will implement protocols for the public celebration of the Eucharist. These protocols can be found on our diocesan website. These protocols are the result of consultation with a broad scope of people and experts including our own priests. I thank our priests who have continued to minister to our faithful even in the midst of such difficulty and who have been such a support to me in these difficult times. I ask that you cooperate with your parish priests and assist them in any way you can with the implementation.

Although we will begin opening our churches for public worship, I am extending the dispensation from the obligation of Sunday Mass and Holy Days. I do this to accommodate those who, for whatever reason, are not yet comfortable or able to attend public worship.

I pray that the Lord will look kindly on us and that an end to the pandemic will soon be in sight. I ask also that the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, intercede on our behalf.

Be assured of my prayers for you daily. Please, pray for me.

Yours devotedly in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger J. Foys". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol to the left of the first letter.

Most Reverend Roger J. Foys, D.D.
Bishop of Covington