



## *Diocese of Rockford*

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Office of the Bishop

October 1, 2020

Dear Monsignor/Father,

I write to you with further guidance as we continue to modify our plan of moving toward restoring our parishes to the fullness of parish life.

### **Current Status of Parish Operations:**

Since early June, 2020, parishes have been allowed to resume Masses in the presence of the faithful inside the Church upon verifying that social distancing of 6 feet, mask wearing, frequent handwashing by all, cleaning and disinfecting, and the other directives of “Back in His Presence” are in place and being followed. The number of faithful allowed to attend Masses in person is currently not to exceed 30% of the seating capacity of the parish church. The actual number of the faithful who can be accommodated in each church will vary from that maximum number in order to implement the necessary spacing for social distancing.

Additionally, since early July, 2020, parish and school meetings and gatherings essential to the life of the parish and/or school have been permitted to convene in parish halls and meeting rooms with up to 50 attendees, provided safety protocols are followed and space allows. Parish and school social events, gatherings unrelated to prayer or the administration of the parish or school, and gatherings involving food, have not been permitted at the parishes and schools.

### **New Directives for Parishes and Schools NOT located in McHenry County or Kane County:**

This week, due to a reported resurgence of covid-19 cases in the northwestern part of our State, Governor Pritzker issued certain “Mitigations for Region 1,” effective October 3, 2020, and to continue for at least two weeks. The Mitigations affect the nine counties making up Region 1: Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago (“the nine affected counties”). Thus, the Mitigations apply to the parishes, schools, and other diocesan facilities located in one of those nine affected counties. The Mitigations do not apply to our parishes, schools, and other entities located in McHenry and Kane Counties.

Parishes in all the counties comprising the Diocese may continue to celebrate Mass in the presence of the faithful, following the “Back in His Presence” directives, with attendance permitted at 30% of capacity of the Church. Parishes whose churches are under renovation currently are to use 30% of the capacity of the school gym or other location where Mass is celebrated, in determining the capacity.

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Attendance at weddings and funerals held in the Church is limited to 30% of capacity of the Church. A news outlet reported that these gatherings are limited to 25 persons. However, weddings and funerals are liturgical ceremonies typically associated with Mass, and therefore the 30% rule applies.

The Governor's Mitigations revise the maximum number of persons able to attend meetings and gatherings, to the lesser of 25 persons or 25% of room capacity. Thus, parishes and schools and other entities located in one of the nine affected counties must scale back their maximum attendance to 25 persons or 25% of room capacity until further notice from the Diocese. Parishes, schools and entities in McHenry County and Kane County may continue to hold parish and school essential in-person meetings and gatherings of up to 50 persons, following safety protocols.

The prohibition of food and drinks at any meetings and gatherings remains in effect for all.

Again, brothers, I ask for your support and your leadership with the faithful as we progress through this ongoing health crisis. Please join me in praying for God's guidance for ourselves and for the faithful as we seek to return to the regular and public celebration of the sacraments.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *David J. Malloy*

Most Reverend David J. Malloy  
Bishop of Rockford