



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

---

**20 May 2020, 1:00 p.m.**

### **Reopening of parishes in the Archdiocese of Dubuque**

- [News Release](#) of the message below
- [Lee el mensaje en español](#)

I am happy to announce that starting 30-31 May 2020, Pentecost Sunday, the parishes in the Archdiocese of Dubuque are able to gather for outreach to the poor, for faith formation programs, and for the public celebration of Mass and Sacraments - Thanks be to God!

This decision was based on receiving confirmation of our interpretation of the relevant data, namely, that there has been a 14-day downward trend in positive tests, hospitalizations, and deaths related to COVID-19 in the 30 northeastern counties in Iowa.

The priests in the Archdiocese of Dubuque are kindly asked not to start before the reopening date of 30-31 May 2020.

The parishioners in the Archdiocese of Dubuque are kindly asked to understand if Mass is not available locally, should the priest decide that it isn't prudent to reopen on account of his own compromised health situation, or because the coronavirus is still raging in the area.

The reason for the delay between announcing the reopening and actually doing it is to give time to take the necessary measures to ensure the health and safety of everyone. A checklist has been provided to parishes to suggest what needs attention before reopening.

We're not yet out of the woods; the coronavirus is still with us. If we're not careful, it could come back with a vengeance. We will continue to monitor the data.

Our policy remains: err on the side of caution. That's why, at any gathering for outreach to the poor, faith formation, and worship we'll be asked to do things like wear a mask, practice social distancing, and at Mass, for Holy Communion, receive only the Host, and in the hand.

Also, if we're sick, or frail due to advanced age, or have an underlying medical condition, or nervous about getting COVID-19, we shouldn't be gathering together *for any reason*.

With regard to gathering for a liturgy or a devotional in church, on account of social distancing, there will only be room for a smaller number of people to attend.

But not to worry, because everyone will still remain dispensed from the law to participate in Mass on Sundays and holy days, *until further notice*, probably when a vaccine is available. Those who want to receive Holy Communion can satisfy that desire at a weekday Mass.

When we open, remember to pray for those who died during the pandemic, and for those who haven't been able to grieve their passing properly. And pray, too, for people who are sick, for caregivers, and for those who live in fear for their lives and their livelihood.

Gathering for faith formation programs, and for public celebration of Mass and Sacraments are important practices of our holy Catholic Faith. But so is charity, inspiring our care for the poor, and our devotion to the common good, which inspires the precautions we're taking.

We eventually want the pews filled, and programs well-attended, it just might take some time. Prayers for the end of the pandemic's threat, as well as patience and cooperation are what's needed most right now. May God bless us all.

Archbishop Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque