



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LEXINGTON

THE CATHOLIC CENTER
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

11 May 2020

Dear Pastors, Parish Life Directors, Parochial Vicars, Sacramental Ministers and Pastoral Associates,

Christ is Risen! We are celebrating the fifty days of Easter in most unusual circumstances. I am grateful to each one of you for doing all that you can to keep our communities connected in a time of “social distancing” and for providing opportunities to actively participate in worship, devotions, meetings, and even virtual social events despite the restrictions under which we now live and work.

The pages that follow contain both DIRECTIVES and GUIDELINES as well as other Considerations for the safe resumption of public celebration of the mass and other liturgies in the Diocese of Lexington. The DIRECTIVES are to be taken in a strict sense and followed carefully for the safety of all who gather in our churches for worship. The GUIDELINES allow for more flexibility, but your own church’s practices should be explained to all participants, especially the ministers for the liturgy.

It should be clear to all that we are still in the midst of a pandemic and that we are not returning to normal practices at this time; things will be different for the foreseeable future. Ushers and/or Hospitality Ministers will need very special training to help people understand the differences and practice social distancing at all times during the liturgy, even as they enter and depart.

Because this pandemic is unlike anything we have experienced before, and new information and understanding of the Covid-19 virus continues to be developed, we should be aware that these practices may have to be changed or modified. Because of the possibility of increased contracting of the virus, our public worship may have to be suspended again in the future.

As Catholics, our lives of worship and all that we do is centered on the Eucharist. As a Eucharistic people who follow a Savior who laid down his life for us, we are committed to the common good and the well-being of the larger community. We are striving to live this reality the best that we can.

Subject to further alteration, **as of May 20, 2020 the prohibition on public celebrations of the mass is lifted.** Public celebrations of the mass may resume on that day subject to the implementation of these DIRECTIVES and active concern for the health and safety of all our people.

Peace and all good,

Most Reverend John Stowe, OFM Conv.
Bishop of Lexington