



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

June 23, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

For almost a month now we have had the opportunity to resume public Masses in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Our pastors and parish staff are very happy to see you again! The diocese has provided detailed guidance on safety and sanitization protocols to our pastors. The diocese's guidelines were reviewed by doctors in West Michigan, including an infectious disease expert. Their confidence in our precautions assured me that we could responsibly resume the all-important task of celebrating the Eucharist together. The logistics for how these directives are implemented will be different for each parish. Please watch your parish website or social media, or call the parish office for details.

I remind those who are able to attend Mass to abide by the diocesan/parish guidelines in order to protect your fellow congregants as well as yourselves and your loved ones. I thank you for your cooperation and especially thank pastors who are doing their best to see that everyone who comes to church remains as safe as possible by observing the guidelines. While I believe we have done our best to protect the health and well-being of our parishioners, I am well aware the risks of COVID-19 remain.

Therefore, I am extending the dispensation for all Catholics within the territory of the Diocese of Grand Rapids from their obligation of attending Sunday Mass through July 31. The dispensation is granted broadly to ensure that anyone who needs to stay home to protect the common good can do so confidently, in good conscience. But those who are truly able to attend Mass should remember that we are transformed by being joined to Christ in the Eucharist. Only a weighty reason should keep us from being sanctified through participation in and our reception of Christ's body and blood.

Our obligation to keep holy the Lord's Day is of utmost importance to our continued faith life. Mass will continue to be televised at 10 a.m. Sunday on FOX 17 and livestreamed on the diocesan website (grdiocese.org) and Facebook page ([Diocese of Grand Rapids](https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofGrandRapids)).

Please continue to check the diocesan website: <http://bit.ly/GRdioceseCOVID19Updates> and social media for the latest information on our COVID-19 response.

In this time of trial and testing, may we all love and care for one another and be patient and kind. We entrust our prayers to the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, patroness of those who suffer illness.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids