



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

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WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

May 7, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Peace be with you! This was the very greeting the Risen Christ spoke to His disciples who were gathered in a locked room out of fear. It seems extremely appropriate that I extend this greeting to you, His disciples, who have been confined to your homes and locked out of our churches. He breathed on them the Holy Spirit, and they were transformed by the gifts of that Spirit and set free.

As you know Governor Justice has begun the process of re-opening the State of West Virginia. This allows us to begin to resume celebrating Masses with congregations in our churches. The closing of churches and businesses occurred very quickly. The re-opening of businesses and of churches will be very different. Prudence demands that it occur in stages and be monitored carefully.

In planning for the resumption of public Masses in our churches, I have consulted with the priests from around the State and diocesan lay leaders. I am profoundly grateful that the directives we have developed will allow us to resume public Masses in the safest and most prudent manner possible.

I need to stress that this will not be an immediate return to the way it was before the closures. The enclosed directives are for a transitional phase until we are able to return fully to our normal way of celebrating Catholic liturgies. It will be necessary for priests and people to be disciplined in implementing the directives, lest carelessness lead to contributing to the spread of the Covid-19 virus. We will watch closely how the directives work in practice.

Know that I deeply appreciate your patience, understanding and cooperation. I continue to pray for all in our State during these challenging times. I pray particularly for those who have the coronavirus and for the families of those who have died from the virus. I pray that those who serve the victims of this virus, especially our health-care personnel, may be especially blessed for their dedication and courage.

As we approach the end of the Easter Season and the feast of Pentecost, let us open our hearts and minds and pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to be our strength and bless our future.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Enclosures