

Dear Friends,

The Lord is Risen – Happy Easter!

The Ohio Bishops met yesterday. After consultation and a close examination of the facts determined that while it is not yet possible to begin the public celebration of Mass, we are looking at a target date of May 30/31 – Pentecost Sunday hopefully to resume our celebrations. Each of us continues to dispense all Catholics from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and I also dispense from the canonical obligation of Easter Duty. During his press conference yesterday, Governor DeWine indicated that through increased and widespread testing and other means, much knowledge will emerge to allow for safer conditions for the assemblies of people. In the meantime, we will begin the gradual process in various ways.

This week many of our priests will begin setting aside dedicated time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a wide basis by appointment and in places deemed to provide for safety and hygiene. These locations will include spaces free of the need to touch surfaces such as doors or furniture, providing appropriate social distancing and privacy and limiting the number of people gathered at any one time to a bare minimum. The locations and contact numbers for appointments will be posted on our Diocesan Website ( [www.columbuscatholic.org](http://www.columbuscatholic.org) ) beginning Wednesday April 29th so that appointments for confessions may be scheduled, and hearing confessions can begin Friday May 1st. We will be working to make it possible in at least some of our churches for people to visit and pray during certain hours in the coming weeks. Again, care for the continued health and safety of those who visit is paramount.

The process of preparing for Mass will encompass many considerations. We will work to be ensure that the Churches are clean and safe. We are working to have plans in place to manage seating and movement, allowing for safe social distancing; this may perhaps limit the number of people in the Church or any other spaces at any given time. We will follow the guidelines for assemblies regarding face-coverings and other protective measures. It may be necessary to adjust schedules to allow for priests to help each other beyond parish boundaries. In recent weeks there has been a task force looking at the many opportunities for evangelization here in the diocese. Their work will turn to provide recommendations on how we as a diocese and as parishes use this time for pastoral and interior preparation.

Looking ahead with hope and anticipation I ask your prayers. Looking back, I can only do so with deep gratitude for your continued goodness, your sacrifices, your patience and understanding. I am convinced that the measures we have taken together with the rest of our community have made a significant difference. Let's pray for those who have suffered deeply, especially those who have died and those who mourn. And let's never forget the sacrifices and hard work that so many people heroically make for us and our well-being.

In the peace of our Risen Lord,

+Bishop Brennan