



MEMORANDUM

TO: CLERGY, RELIGIOUS, COMMUNICATION COORDINATORS & PASTORAL CENTER STAFF

FROM: BISHOP MYRON J. COTTA

DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2021

RE: UPDATE ON INDOOR MASSES

Brothers and Sisters,

We give thanks for the recent Supreme Court ruling recognizing that the prohibition of indoor worship is a violation of our religious liberty. At the same time, we do not in any way wish to downplay the seriousness of the pandemic. We will be returning indoor services, not only because of this ruling but also because we know that it can be done safely. There have been thousands if not millions of safe celebrations of the Mass throughout the country over the past months since indoor Masses have resumed. We are still not aware of a single outbreak occurring at a Catholic Mass where safety protocols were being strictly followed, even when an asymptomatic individual was present who later tested positive for COVID-19.

For that safety record to continue, it is absolutely vital that all of us continue to follow the safeguards attached to this document, so that we can show that our worship is safe, even indoors. The maximum capacity for indoor Masses is now 25% (still with physical distancing), without the hard limit of 100. I ask priests, where practical, to continue to provide an outdoor Mass, in order to accommodate greater numbers, allow for singing, and provide for those who still may not feel comfortable worshipping inside. In addition, I am also encouraging parishes to continue livestreamed Masses to accommodate the vulnerable who cannot attend public Mass.

Parishes may begin indoor Masses this weekend if they are prepared to do so.

As Bishop, I commend the Faithful, Clergy, Parish staffs and Parish volunteers for their patience and understanding through the numerous transitions since the pandemic began and I ask of you again for that same cooperation.

The Pastoral Center Staff and myself look forward to working *As One* with parishes as they anticipate celebrating indoor Masses once again. If there are any questions regarding the reopening of indoor Masses, please contact **Michael Schmitz, Director of Liturgy Worship** or **Chandler Marquez, Director of Communications** by contacting the Pastoral Center at (209) 466-0636.

Let us continue to pray for a swift end to the pandemic.

In the Peace of Christ,

Bishop Myron J. Cotta