



DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

Department of Communication

News

For Immediate Release

DATE: May 23, 2020
FROM: Deacon David Montgomery
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RE: Churches in the Diocese of Davenport Opening Next Week for Private Prayer

From Bishop Thomas Zinkula:

The desire of the faithful for Communion – with Christ in the Eucharist and with each other in person – is sacred and holy. Hopefully, we can return relatively soon to the public celebration of the Mass and their longing will be fulfilled. Until then, we will continue to stay close to the Lord and one another by means of personal prayer.

The process of reopening the churches for private prayer and resuming the celebration of public Masses will be reasonable, responsible and gradual. It will occur in three steps. Unfortunately, we likely will have to maintain physical distancing for quite some time. Throughout this process, all Catholics in the Diocese of Davenport are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.

Step 1 reopens the churches for private prayer if a process of regular cleaning and disinfection can be maintained. Since the number of new COVID-19 cases, deaths, hospitalizations, and percentage of positive tests has begun to trend down, parishes may open their churches for private prayer, beginning the week of May 25, at the discretion of the pastor.

Everyone must wear face protection. No more than ten people may be in the church at any one time. There is no public celebration of the Mass. The celebration outside of Mass of Baptisms, weddings, and funerals can include up to ten people. Adoration chapels remain closed.

Step 2 resumes public Masses with some restrictions. Now that the churches are reopened, the data from the Iowa Department of Public Health will be monitored, and if it continues to show a downward trend for fourteen days, we will begin to celebrate public Masses once again.

At that time, public worship may take place at the discretion of the pastor if physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting can be maintained. Everyone must wear face protection. Those who are at a greater risk of infection due to age and/or health condition should stay home.

Participants maintain six-foot distancing by sitting in every third pew and horizontally apart from other households. Distancing also should be maintained while gathering, during the Communion procession, and following the Mass. Singing should be omitted.

Other church spaces may be used in addition to or instead of the church itself if physical distancing is maintained. Outdoor spaces on church property may be used either as overflow or with Mass celebrated entirely outside. Audio should be provided.



Public celebration of Exposition and Adoration may take place if limited to thirty minutes, physical distancing is maintained, and face protection is worn. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not to visit homes. Pastors will be given the faculty to administer Confirmation.

Step 3 relaxes some of the liturgical restrictions. This will occur when data support the conclusion that we are between pandemic waves (reduction to low and constant or decreasing numbers for at least fourteen days).

At this time, seating in every other row can occur, and a six-foot distance should be maintained between households horizontally. Cantors may be used but without choirs or hymns. The Gloria, psalm and responses may be sung.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals may be celebrated at Mass. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who are not at high risk of infection may make home visits to the sick (not COVID-19 patients) if necessary. Communal celebration of the Anointing of the Sick is discouraged.

Once there is “herd immunity” – probably through the wide availability of a safe and effective vaccine – there will be a return to “normal” liturgical practices, initially with the kind of precautions taken during the flu season.

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