



URGENT MEMORANDUM

To: Priests, Deacons, Pastoral Leaders, Parishes, and Religious Houses

From: Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas

Re: Update Regarding the Current Pandemic and Liturgical Celebrations

Date: Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (November 2, 2020)

Truly the Lord has borne our infirmities, and he has carried our sorrows.

-Entrance Antiphon, Mass in Time of Pandemic

I continue to be encouraged and grateful for the many ways in which our Catholic faithful are ministered to and for the various means churches have employed to keep their parishioners connected to their parish and to provide a safe and reassuring atmosphere for the celebration of the liturgy. Throughout these months I have advised Pastors/Administrators/Pastoral Leaders to follow the guidance issued by state, county, and local public health officials and to implement them to the best of their practical ability using prudence and pastoral sensitivity. I thank all who have taken, and continue to take, those steps necessary to safeguard the faithful, as best as humanly possible, when attending Mass and other liturgies.

Please be advised that the previously published guidelines/policies remain in effect. Having consulted the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the following information is now provided to you in order to aid your planning in the upcoming months.

DISPENSATION FROM ATTENDING SUNDAY MASS AND HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

The faithful are to be reminded that that the dispensation to attend Sunday Mass, and Holy Days of Obligation, remains in place for the foreseeable future until you are notified otherwise.

Those who are at high risk, especially the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions are to be strongly advised to refrain from Mass attendance out of concern for their own well-being and out of Christian charity for others.

STATE OF OHIO PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY SYSTEM AND PARISH CHURCHES

In early July the Department of Health of the State of Ohio published a color-coded advisory system designed to supplement existing statewide orders to assess the degree of spread of COVID-19 in each of the 88 counties of Ohio. The system ranges from Level 1 (yellow) to the highest level designated Level 4 (purple).

If a Level 4 (purple) designation is issued for a county, or counties, in the Diocese of Toledo, or were the governor to issue a “stay-at-home” order for the State of Ohio, extra concern and caution is to be employed. Because the Church is deemed essential for the spiritual welfare of souls and realizing that churches have been, and continue to be exempt, parishes in the Diocese of Toledo will continue to celebrate public Masses and liturgies while, of course, observing all the precautions already in place (50% church capacity, wearing of masks/facial coverings, proper social distancing and the sanitization of the church). Pastors/Administrator/Pastoral Leaders are to continue implementing all current or additional federal, state, or local regulations, for the common good, to the best of their prudent, pastoral, and practical ability.

VISITS TO NURSING HOMES AND OTHER HEALTH FACILITIES

Because many nursing homes and other health care facilities are currently, or once again, limiting public visitations due to COVID-19 outbreaks, parishes should make arrangements with each facility/institution as to how best to provide the sacraments to the faithful with particular care for those who are gravely ill.

GROUP CONFIRMATION MASSES AT ROSARY CATHEDRAL IN WINTER AND SPRING 2021: CANCELLED

In consultation with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and after prayerful consideration, I have deemed it most prudent to cancel the multi-parish group Confirmation Masses already scheduled at Rosary Cathedral in the winter and spring of 2021. It is my judgment that it is best for the spiritual welfare of our candidates for Confirmation and the pastoral good of our parish communities, by way of exception, to grant to those Pastors/Administrators/Presbyteral Moderators & Chaplains, scheduled to come to the Cathedral for these liturgies, the faculty to confirm their parishioners in their parish church.

A letter from the Chancery will be forthcoming that will include the granting of this faculty to these Pastors/Administrators/Presbyteral Moderators & Chaplains.

Kindly note that I, Msgr. Kubacki and Msgr. Borger will, insofar as possible, continue to visit and confer the Sacrament of Confirmation in individual parishes where previously scheduled. If future conditions warrant a change kindly contact the Office of the Bishop. If a parish was scheduled to attend a multi-parish group Confirmation Mass the Pastor/Administrator/Pastoral Leader may choose to contact the Office of the Bishop in order to invite the Bishop, or his Delegate, to celebrate the conferral of Confirmation.

The Adult Confirmation Mass is now tentatively scheduled for the Vigil of Pentecost on Saturday, May 22, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. at Rosary Cathedral.

May the Communion of Saints continue to intercede for us and may the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.