



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE of
SPRINGFIELD-CAPE GIRARDEAU

Office of the Bishop

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Monsignors and Fathers
FROM: Most Reverend Edward M. Rice *+EMR*
DATE: June 16, 2020
SUBJECT: **COVID-19 Pandemic Restrictions Upda-e**

With the decision of the Governor to lift restrictions in Missouri, some persons are wondering what this means for our parishes, therefore I am providing the following clarification:

- Parishes must follow the restrictions of the county or municipality in which they are located;
- Parishes may use their facilities for all parish sponsored programs and ministries (but not commercial or rental activity), provided that the following precautions are implemented;
- Those who are immunocompromised are encouraged not to attend;
- Those with communicable illnesses, or showing symptoms thereof, are not permitted on Church property;
- The use of six-feet of social distancing, the wearing of masks (highly encouraged), the use of hand sanitizer and the frequent sanitation of facilities are measures that continue to be recommended by State and Federal health authorities. We will continue these practices in our parishes;
- Consistent with the above, we will also continue to keep Holy Water fonts empty, not place hymnals or other written materials in pews, require ministers of Holy Communion to be masked, skip the Sign of Peace and not administer the Precious Blood;
- Pastors may decide to distribute Communion at the normal time during the Mass, distribute bulletins after Mass, and include singing or music in the liturgy.

Even though the obligation to attend Mass is dispensed:

- I encourage all Catholics who are not at particular risk from the SARS-CoV-2 virus to return to attending Mass in person at their parish;
- I ask priests and deacons to preach on the importance of physically attending Mass, for which there is no substitute, and to encourage the practice of the sacrament of Confession.

I expect that our current approach will remain in place for the foreseeable future.