



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 29, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ:

The Catholic community in the Diocese of Sacramento will be able to celebrate the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi, around the sacred altars of their parish churches on Sunday, June 14th.

I am lifting the heartbreaking suspension of public celebrations of the Sacrifice of the Mass starting on Monday, June 8th. This will help pastors ready the churches for the glorious Feast of Corpus Christi. Parishes that are prepared to implement all the necessary public health protocols may begin offering Mass with the Faithful on June 8th.

My brother priests and I are taking all the steps to ensure the Feast of Corpus Christi is celebrated in a manner that gives peace of mind to all our brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus.

The public guidelines I recently shared for resuming public celebrations of the Mass have been updated to reflect our continued work with public health officials. These guidelines are available on the diocesan website. These guidelines include limiting attendance to the lower of either 25% of church capacity or a maximum of 100 congregants. Pastors will also make these guidelines available to their parishioners. Please consult with your local parish to confirm the schedule of Masses and other directives intended to provide a safe environment for everyone in the church assembly.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not ended but conditions have improved sufficiently so that we can begin to offer the Mass and other sacraments in a cautious and responsible manner. It is still necessary to maintain physical-distancing. The wearing of masks in church is strongly recommended. Those who are 65 years of age and older should remain at home. Those with a vulnerable health condition should also continue to stay in their homes. To continue to protect the most vulnerable among us, the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still in effect. If you feel sick or have any flu-like symptoms, do not come to Church. Stay home. Again, please consult the diocesan website or your parish for more information on how to be safe and protect one another from the coronavirus contagion.

With these new guidelines in place, we are still not able to come back to the table as in the past. As we adapt to these changes, we are all called to greater charity and understanding during this transition. Our continued vigilance respects those who are afflicted and honors those who risk their own lives in caring for them. The patient efforts each of us makes are an act of Christian solidarity that will strengthen the whole Body of Christ.

Our Lord Jesus has been the Good Shepherd throughout the Lenten and Easter Seasons. He has also been our wise, good Teacher instructing us through the sacrifices we have endured. These tribulations

will continue for many of us. Our sharing in the Lord's passion has offered a communion in the Lord's saving death.

As we prepare to approach the Lord's altar of sacrifice, may you know His consoling mercy and His encouraging grace. This Pentecost Sunday, we will continue to gather behind the closed doors as did the first disciples. The Blessed Mother Mary was in their company as they prayed. She will certainly be with each of you and your families. Pray with her as she intercedes for all of us. Her example teaches us to be open to the Spirit's promptings even in these uncertain days. The Holy Spirit will help us to welcome the Lord Jesus with open hands and hearts as the Feast of Corpus Christi draws closer.

Be assured that Bishop Weigand, my brother priests and I continue to offer our Masses and pray for all of you so that soon we may taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jaime Soto", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

+Jaime Soto
Bishop of Sacramento