

From the Archdiocese of Detroit

Dear brothers and sisters,

As the Body of Christ, the Church in all her sons and daughters has been enduring a time of severe trial. As we continue to practice social distancing to limit the spread of coronavirus, I write today with deep gratitude for all of you, the faithful of southeast Michigan, who have been walking the path of love for one another, particularly the most vulnerable among us, by sacrificing your ability to gather together for Mass during these last several weeks. Thank you for your witness and your faith.

Many of you have shared your sadness and devoted desire to return to Mass. Please know that I listen to your longing for the Eucharist and have taken them to prayer as I have discerned each step of the Archdiocese of Detroit's response to this global pandemic. I share your desire to return to normal liturgical life and reestablish the rich spiritual and communal life of our parishes and schools.

We are grateful to God that public Masses are once again becoming a possibility in a few other dioceses less affected by the pandemic. While we do not yet have a firm date when it will be safe to resume public gatherings here, please know that we continue to monitor the incidence of coronavirus in southeast Michigan and are following the lead of local health officials and civil authorities. We will resume public Masses, and other parish events, when we are confident that doing so will not pose undue risk to the health and well-being of the members of our community.

Meanwhile, let us look with joyful hope toward some more gradual returns to normalcy. Last week, we published updated liturgical guidelines allowing for the celebration of weddings, funerals, and baptisms, as long as these gatherings adhere to current social distancing practices. Families wishing to postpone these events until it is safe to gather in larger numbers are welcome to do so, except when there is danger of death and baptism is urgently necessary.

It is important to note that the sacrament of Pen-

ance and Reconciliation has not been prohibited during the pandemic in the Archdiocese of Detroit and pastors have been encouraged throughout to use their discretion to determine how to safely administer this sacrament to the faithful. Likewise, Anointing of the Sick and the pastoral care of the sick and the dying have continued as clergy are able and with respect for individual hospital or home policies. For more information about all these guidelines and other resources, please visit www.aod.org/emergencyresponse.

It is my fervent prayer that we will gather again soon for Mass, in one form or another. We know that this return will look and feel different from what we are used to experiencing. As we move forward, we must remember God's unending love for us and his ability to bring good from our trials. He created each of us to live in this moment, during this pandemic so that we might give witness to our confidence in the good news of the Lord's victory over suffering and death. Please pray that I may rise to this challenge, as I will pray for you.

Let us also continue to pray for our heroic health care workers, for those who are ill or who have died from the virus, and for their families. We entrust them and our entire Archdiocese into the loving care of Our Lady of Lourdes, patron of the sick. To this end, I invite all to join me for a Rosary and renewal of the consecration of our Archdiocese to Mary, live-streamed at 7 p.m. Wednesday on Facebook and online. With this prayerful act we unite ourselves once again with the faithful of Canada and Latin America to entrust all our nations to the Blessed Mother. Through her intercession, may God bring about an end to the pandemic and grant healing and protection to the people of southeast Michigan and beyond.

Please know of my prayers for you and our whole State of Michigan during these days. Asking the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,
The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit

