



Catholic Diocese of Evansville

Office of the Bishop

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October 22, 2020

Dear Fathers and Janie,

Attached is a statement that announces that the Indiana bishops have extended the dispensation from the Sunday and holy day obligation until further notice. As you recall, in August we extended the dispensation to November 1, hoping that the COVID-19 numbers would have decreased by this time. However, as we all know, this has not been the case and in fact there has been a surge in parts of our diocese as well in the state. Also, with the current social distancing requirements, it would have been hard for many parishes to fit more people into their churches for Mass. Further, it did not seem prudent to set a date to lift the dispensation until the case numbers warrant it, especially with the onset of the flu season. I am grateful for the input I received from the Council of Priests, Consultors, Deans, and others, which I brought to the deliberations of the Province bishops.

I realize this may be disappointing to some who had hoped to have been able to invite all their parishioners to return to Mass. However, given the facts before us, this extension seems the prudent course to follow. As you will note in the statement, I continue to encourage those who are in the high risk categories to remain at home and to virtually participate in Mass. I know you will continue to provide outreach and pastoral care to those in this group. I also encourage those not in the high risk categories to come to Mass, following diocesan and parish protocols.

I know our ministry is challenging in these uncertain times as we strive to serve our people while limited by the necessary protocols to safeguard our people's health and wellbeing. I am grateful for the tremendous work you are doing. Please continue to observe the diocesan guidelines to protect yourself and your parishioners. If I or any of the diocesan directors can be of assistance to you and your parish staff, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Let us keep one another, our diocese and our country in prayer as we continue to navigate these troubled times.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop Sigel