



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Office of the Archbishop

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My Brothers in Holy Orders,

In recent days I have received numerous letters and messages from the faithful asking if the public celebration of the Mass will again be suspended. I thought it helpful to share with you the response letter I have written.

Dear _____,

Thank you for your recent letter. Unlike governors in some states, Governor DeWine has never asked the Catholic Bishops of Ohio to lock churches or discontinue the public celebration of Mass. He has kept the Bishops apprised of the seriousness of this pandemic in the State of Ohio, and we have instructed our people to comply with the Governor's mandate to wear masks and practice social distancing. Compliance with the mandate is an expression of love and concern for the health and well-being of our neighbor.

In March, the Bishops of Ohio did suspend the public celebration of Mass, but this was OUR decision because so little was known about the virus at that time – its spread, its contagion, etc. Once the Bishops, and the public in general, had a better grasp of the data, the Bishops reopened the churches for the public celebration of Mass. The dispensation from the Sunday obligation remains in place, and the Bishops have encouraged Catholics to attend Mass on any day of the week when the mandate for social distancing (along with wearing a mask) can be followed.

Even though the virus is spiking once again in the State of Ohio, the Bishops have no intention of suspending the public celebration of Mass as we did in March. In the last months, much has been learned about the spread of the virus and what cautions can be taken to curtail the spread. As long as the guidance of public health offices is followed – wear masks, social distance, sanitize hands and churches on a regular basis, maximize fresh air exchange within buildings, etc. – the Bishops of Ohio are of the opinion that public Masses can continue to be celebrated. We must be concerned about both the spiritual and physical health of our people.

With prayerful best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr
Archbishop of Cincinnati

RADIATE CHRIST