



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

## ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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Monday, 8 June, 2020

Dear Brother Priests,

I reach out to you today to once again thank you for all that you have been doing to care for our parishioners and the people in your surrounding communities during this challenging time. Please extend my gratitude once more to your staff and volunteers in your parish, as well as to those who have continued to contribute financially, all of whom make our ministries possible.

The Church bears witness each day, but particularly on the upcoming Solemnity of *Corpus Christi*, that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. Our Lord gave us this Blessed Sacrament so that we might be one in and with His very Body and Blood, and receive the inestimable graces that are obtained from Holy Communion.

Now, some areas have begun the process of reopening society. But as you are aware, not all civil jurisdictions within the territory of the archdiocese have allowed religious gatherings in a consistent manner. The parishes in the Southern Maryland area of this great archdiocese have been able to gather inside for Mass at numbers that would approach 50 percent of building capacity. The governments of the District of Columbia, Prince George's County and Montgomery County, however, have not yet allowed for that, but instead prohibit gatherings of more than ten persons at all locations and venues.

Effective tomorrow, June 9, 2020, I am authorizing our parishes in the District and Prince George's and Montgomery Counties to begin celebrating Masses publicly in their churches or outside for up to ten persons including clergy, consistent with the archdiocesan reopening guidelines. This includes the option of Holy Communion outside of Mass as also outlined in the reopening guidelines. I will leave to each pastor how to plan for the number and the timing of the services at each of your parishes. A pastor may delay if still needing time to prepare or wanting to wait until their jurisdiction allows greater numbers.

Please know of our efforts to push these three jurisdictions to allow resumption of religious services consistent with the other jurisdictions allowing greater numbers. In these steps, I know that you join with me in the hope and prayer that we can fully restore our liturgical life as expeditiously and safely as possible.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

✠ Wilton D. Gregory  
Archbishop of Washington