



24 June 2020

My Dear People of God,

At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation for the willing spirit, faithfulness, and concern for neighbor that you have shown as our world has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our civic leaders and public health officials have indicated that we are making significant progress against the disease and no doubt, the sacrifices that we have made in the public practice of the faith are part of that progress.

In recent weeks we have enjoyed the measured and incremental resumption of the public celebration of Mass across the Diocese of Nashville. Still, we remain far from the “normal” to which we were all accustomed.

As you may remember, the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day Masses and the cancellation of non-liturgical gatherings are currently effective through June 30. To encourage everyone to continue to exercise prudent care over their health and wellbeing and charity towards others, I am extending the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days through August 3.

Even as public Masses have resumed, I encourage those who are vulnerable, sick, or otherwise at risk or concerned about contracting or spreading disease, to refrain from attending Mass. Those who do choose to return to Mass should observe all guidelines concerning social distancing and diligent hygiene. We will be continuing to provide resources for growth in your life of Faith, and opportunities to watch celebrations of Mass online. Attending Mass on a weekday can also be a good way to participate in public worship in a smaller and more socially distanced setting.

In concert with phased civic regulations that are currently expanding access to a variety of different types of gatherings, pastors may now resume non-liturgical events as they deem appropriate for their communities, with due regard for specific guidelines concerning occupancy restrictions and social distancing indicated by the civic authorities. I ask that parishes continue their practices of hand hygiene, the use of masks, and other modifications of the liturgy which are in place to minimize risk. If maintaining social distancing is possible, pastors may consider beginning to expand attendance at Masses beyond the previous 50% capacity restriction.

As I have assured you throughout this time, please know of my sincere love and concern for all of you and your families. My thoughts and prayers are with you. Let us pray together that this time of renewed optimism for an end to this time of crisis may soon be brought to fulfillment by the power of God’s loving care and providence.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend J. Mark Spalding, D.D., J.C.L.  
Bishop of Nashville

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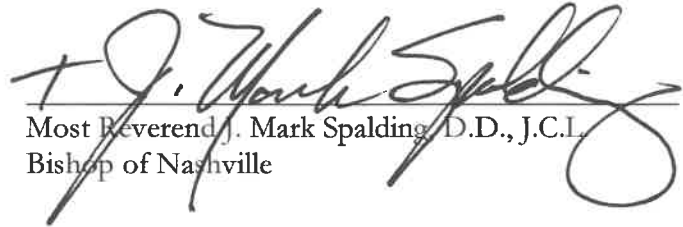


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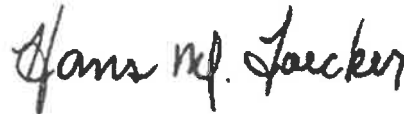
## DECREE

SINCE the worldwide health crisis related to the *COVID-19* pandemic remains ongoing, and civil authorities have continued to encourage all individuals to exercise prudence in returning to activities of public life,

I hereby **EXTEND** the provisions of my decree, as established on 17 March 2020 and renewed on 31 March and 24 April 2020, through 3 August 2020.



Most Reverend J. Mark Spalding, D.D., J.C.L.  
Bishop of Nashville



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Deacon Hans M. Toecker  
Chancellor

Given 24 June 2020 at Nashville, Tennessee.