

July 16, 2020

Dear Monsignor or Father or Deacon:

I am happy to inform you that we have received official confirmation that the Governor's order yesterday limiting indoor gatherings to 25 persons does not apply to religious institutions. *This means that our present protocols as given in the Bishop's decree of May 21 remain fully in place.* A copy of that decree is attached for your reference.

In another update, following a special meeting of the Presbyteral Council yesterday morning (July 15), the Bishop is granting to each pastor the decision of whether or not to celebrate outdoor Masses. These outdoor Masses would still need to follow our protocols (e.g., masks worn for the distribution of Communion, no processions, limited use of ministers, etc.) and practice social distancing. People participating in the Mass are not to be sitting in their cars, but rather it is presumed that people would either stand or bring their own chairs. Parish cemeteries are already sacred places (cf. can. 1205) and are fitting places for outdoor Masses. If other locations are chosen, care should be taken that the location is suitable for public worship (cf. can. 932 §§1-2).

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or Father Chris Singer or Father Matt Kujawinski. With gratitude for your exemplary efforts in the face of continued difficult situations, I assure you of my prayers and support.

Sincerely,
Msgr. Edward M. Lohse
Vicar General