



Diocese of Peoria

**Office of the Vicar General
Spalding Pastoral Center
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Dear Monsignors and Fathers,

All of us are eager to have our lives return to something that approximates normalcy and to resume public worship in our churches. The Bishops of Illinois had a conference call yesterday to discuss this very matter. Bishop Jenky indicated that two themes emerged during the call.

The first theme, and the consensus among the Bishops, is that the faithful need to have the confidence that we know what we are doing before we simply invite people to return. People naturally differ in their willingness to accept risk, and many elements of our life involve some degree of risk taking. Nevertheless, we need to be able to assure the faithful who come to our churches that we indeed have taken reasonable precautions and have procedures in place in this regard. Carelessness or inattention on the part of one of us could easily result in repercussions that will affect all of us – including a loss of confidence on the part of our people.

Bishop Jenky also stated that there is a consensus among the Bishops of Illinois that they act in concert with one another. Materials are being prepared for Parishes to use regarding practical steps for moving forward, and that we do so as a Province rather than piecemeal.

It is our hope that if things go well, we will rather rapidly be able to expand beyond weddings, funerals, and baptisms with the ten-person limit. We hope that soon we will be able to open our churches for regular Masses and that the number of allowable attendees will be based on something like square footage or some percentage of the maximum allowable occupancy as determined by the fire marshal rather than simply a fixed number for every church regardless of its size. As more information becomes available, it will be sent out promptly.

With my warmest personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely in the Lord,

Monsignor Philip D. Halfacre
Vicar General