



Dear Brother Priests,

This is both an exciting and anxious time as we can now see more opportunities to be closer to our Lord through the Sacraments. Like all of you, I appreciate the recent legal clarification which noted that the statewide coronavirus restrictions were applied unequally to worship services. While the religious liberty challenge has been overcome, challenges remain in how we will balance our need for the Sacraments with the need to protect public health.

I ask again as we begin to adapt to these “phases” of public interaction that we continue to do so with patience and humility. We cannot assume that because there are no public health restrictions on worship services that there are no public health risks.

For a great many in our diocese, a return to Mass in any form will not be prudent for health reasons, nor practical because of social distancing. I encourage the continued livestreaming of Masses for all parishes who are currently doing so.

I will continue to waive the obligation of the faithful to attend Sunday Mass. I also entrust to each of you as pastors the ability to prudently adapt how best to serve your parishioners and return to offering the Sacraments while maintaining charity and respect for the health of others.

As we begin to explore offering Sacraments as well as prayer and adoration in our churches as outlined in the following, we will do so following existing community health guidance. We will also be respectful and reverent to the Sacraments as we adhere to that health guidance.

Please pray for each other, especially for those who are ill or afraid.

Please pray for healthcare professionals and for all those whose daily lives are impacted by this situation.

Please also pray that our actions reflect to others the goodness of God and that together we can give His strength to all those who are suffering and burdened by this situation.

In Christ,

† Luis Rafael Zarama, J.C.L.