



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

May 20, 2020

Honorable Tim Walz
Governor
State of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Governor Walz,

Earlier this afternoon, the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota announced that they would resume public masses beginning May 26. The attached letter from the Bishops to their faithful, explaining the decision, was posted on all six of the diocesan websites.

We do not take this step lightly. We sought all along to engage you and your administration in a proactive way, and continue to be willing to do so. We are grateful that Commissioner Harrington and Marge Higgins from the Department of Public Health have been willing to receive our input.

It concerns us, however, that we still are without a clear roadmap, metrics, or definite timeline from your administration about a phased re-opening. Executive Order 20-56, moreover, seems to have taken a step backward, imposing an explicit prohibition on faith-based gatherings where none had existed. Your willingness, at the same time, to allow a “click forward” for other sectors and activities on your dial—many of which cannot be classified as essential as the life of faith, prompts us to consider it necessary to move forward. We certainly remain ready to work with your administration as events unfold and circumstances change.

I would like to note that we voluntarily suspended our public worship without anyone’s direction or your executive order. Now, in light of the relevant information available, and based on the public activities that your administration is now allowing, we have concluded that many of our parishes are ready to safely resume Mass, albeit in a limited way, next week. We feel compelled by pastoral need to provide our people with an opportunity to come together on Pentecost, before the Easter season concludes. We hope that the care with which we have prepared for a return to in-person worship will publicly manifest that we continue to share your goal of protecting lives and safeguarding the well-being of the community during this challenging time.

We are grateful, Governor, for your leadership in guiding our state through this crisis to the point that we now feel comfortable returning to Mass. You can count, moreover, on our continued prayers at those Masses.

Please feel free to contact me with any specific questions or concerns.

Respectfully yours,

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis