



August 26, 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of Savannah,

While the number of COVID-19 cases in Georgia is beginning to decline (yesterday, the seven-day moving average of new cases reported was the lowest since July 2), we are still cautious and concerned for the health of everyone in our diocese. Therefore, after consultation with Bishop-elect Parkes and the College of Consultors, I am extending the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass through September 23, 2020 – the date of the Ordination and Installation of Bishop-elect Parkes as the 15th Bishop of the Diocese of Savannah.

All of the guidelines and best practices that were implemented to keep our places of worship safe and healthy remain in effect, and we continue to work to decrease any possible risk to you and your families. One change to these guidelines concerns capacity: the churches will be open for worship at 25% of full capacity or whatever number is reached while maintaining social distancing guidelines.

Our Catholic Schools are open for in-person learning. We are returning to work. Everyday life is resuming in some fashion and I encourage people to begin coming back to Mass to worship Almighty God with their community. That being said, I remind everyone that if you are ill, do not come to church or school. Any parishioners who are uncomfortable attending Sunday Mass due to the coronavirus or the safety measures implemented at your local parish are excused from their obligation to attend. In addition, if parishioners are in the higher risk category due to illness, age or a chronic health condition or compromised immune system, they are asked to remain at home.

While this dispensation is extended, we need to continue to tend to our spiritual lives. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives as Christians and our presence at Sunday Mass is essential to our relationship with the Lord Jesus. Stay safe and healthy in body and soul!

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, pray for us!

With love and prayers, I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Very Reverend Daniel F. Firmin, J.C.L.

Diocesan Administrator

Diocese of Savannah

