

## **Statement from the Archdiocese Regarding the Project Resumption of the Public Celebration of Mass in the Five-County Region**

In mid-March, the celebration of public Mass was suspended in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the obligation for the faithful to attend Mass was dispensed. Those decisions were not made lightly and were always intended to be temporary measures.

They were made out of necessity for the common good and in recognition of the fact that all of us share a responsibility for the preservation of public health, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this unprecedented time, the Archdiocese has made every effort to provide for the spiritual needs of the faithful as well as the temporal needs of those who benefit from its many charitable works.

It is important to note that Catholic churches in the Archdiocese have never been closed. Local parish churches have remained open for private prayer as well as the celebration of the Sacraments Baptism, Penance, Matrimony, and funeral Masses at the discretion of the local pastor and with respect for guidelines from public health officials as they have evolved over time.

Based on recent statements from government officials at the state level, it is anticipated that the five-county region comprising the Archdiocese of Philadelphia will move into the “yellow” phase of the statewide re-opening plan by Friday, June 5th. As such, it is projected that the celebration of daily and Sunday Masses will resume beginning on Saturday, June 6th.

The administration of the Archdiocese has been working in consultation with public health officials to ensure that such a resumption takes place within the context of state approved guidelines and is actively working to provide appropriate guidance to its clergy so that all will be as prepared as possible when the public celebration of Mass begins again. All of us are eager to open the doors of Church wide for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

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**Editor’s Note:** The period immediately following the lifting of the COVID-19 restrictions requires us to be ready to assist people to reintegrate into an active, in person engagement with parish life. As a result, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia previously launched an initiative aimed at achieving this goal, “Arise!: Restoring Catholic Life After the Pandemic.” Further information about this program can be found at <http://archphila.org/arise/>.