



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Diocese of Stockton will resume public Mass Sunday, June 14** ***Safeguards in place include reduced capacity in churches, face masks***

STOCKTON, CALIF. – Public Masses in the Diocese of Stockton will resume on the solemnity of Corpus Christi, Sunday, June 14 (including Saturday June 13 Vigil Masses), with multiple safeguards and precautions in place to protect the health of parishioners and the community.

Since March 18, Masses have been celebrated and livestreamed online and via social media. Stockton Bishop Myron J. Cotta welcomed the easing of state and county restrictions and the development of safeguards to once again make public celebrations possible.

“All of us are eager to return to celebrating the Risen Christ as a community,” Bishop Cotta said. “But, we must ensure that we are doing so safely and with great care for the well-being of all our community.”

Importantly, attendance at a public Mass is **not** a requirement for Catholics in the diocese at this time. A dispensation issued by Bishop Cotta on March 12, 2020 remains in effect, and those who prefer to remain home and participate via computer are encouraged to do so. Further, those who are elderly, have underlying health conditions or who are otherwise more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus are asked to remain at home at this time.

The safeguards that will be in place were developed in close cooperation with public health experts at the county and state levels. They are designed to make the public gathering as safe as possible. These include:

- Thorough, frequent sanitization of churches, including pews, door handles, railings, etc.
- Shared items, such as hymnals, will not be available.
- Attendance at Mass will be limited to 25 percent of a church’s normal capacity and will not exceed 100 people at any time.
- Social distancing between those who do not share a household will be required.
- Hand sanitizer will be available and used during Mass.
- Parishioners are asked to wear face masks if able to do so safely.
- Singing will not be a part of the liturgy.

Other parishes may implement additional or modified safeguards. Parishioners should consult their parish for specific guidelines, including information on how to attend Mass when capacity is reduced.

These changes, Bishop Cotta said are necessary to protect the health of those who attend, as well as the community at large.

“Much will be different when we return to Mass, but the most important thing is unchanged and unchangeable. Christ waits for us in the Sacrament, whether we participate in person or online. The love of God for His people, and the love of God’s people for one another, these are constants, even in a time of turmoil.”