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Bishop David Zubik Announces Changes in Sacramental Offerings in the Diocese of Pittsburgh

As local, state, and national health authorities are developing gradual reopening plans for our communities and economies, Bishop David Zubik of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh is announcing new directives that allow for limited public celebrations of certain sacraments.

"We have been examining how we can best carry out our mission and ministry while maintaining compliance with government restrictions. These changes represent a safe way for us to begin. We will continue to evaluate the evolving situation and update everyone about further changes," Bishop Zubik said.

The following changes are effective immediately in the Diocese of Pittsburgh:

- **Weddings:** As announced last week, in exceptional circumstances, weddings may be celebrated with no more than ten people including the priest/deacon officiant. Couples must be advised that once the ritual of matrimony is celebrated it cannot be repeated. As such, a Mass of Thanksgiving sometime after the actual wedding ceremony may/should be planned if the couple wishes for more than ten people to gather for a celebration.
- **Funerals:** In exceptional circumstances, funerals with a Mass may be scheduled but with the limit of ten people or fewer. It should also be noted that the cemeteries are still closed for public interments until the restrictions are lifted.
- **Confessions:** The Sacrament of Penance may be celebrated but only outdoors, either in parking lots or another place where social distancing (six feet apart) is absolutely respected. Confessions cannot be celebrated in church, in the rectory, or within any parish building.

Until further notice, church buildings cannot be reopened, and the suspension of the public celebration of the Holy Mass remains in place out of concern for the protection and safety of the faithful.

Carrying out these directives will be at the discretion of individual parish administrators, who will communicate with families to determine the best way to assist them with their needs. People should contact their pastor with questions. Of course, besides these directives from a religious perspective, all local, state, and federal guidelines must be observed.

"As we look forward to the day when we can all join together in our parishes to celebrate Holy Masses again, I remain concerned for the protection of the health of our community. We want to keep everyone healthy, and we want to make sure that we do not put ourselves in a position to advance the contagion," Bishop Zubik said.