

Dear Friends,

As we begin to reopen our country, state, and city, we will be entering a new phase of balancing choices about how to remain safe with choices about re-engaging in normal activities. I want to provide you with as much information as I can as you make well-informed decisions for yourselves and your families. As always, individual decisions need to be considered in light of a sincere Catholic concern for the common good, mindful of the impacts our actions have on the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.

The Ohio bishops have dispensed the Sunday obligation until further notice and the Archbishop has let local parishes know that they may begin public Masses on May 25th. Since our parish is located on the campus of Xavier University, we are also coordinating with Xavier's phased reopening. This phased plan asks most personnel to remain off-campus through July 3rd, in accordance with public health recommendations.

In light of this, Bellarmine Chapel is planning to offer live-streamed liturgies through the end of June. These will not be public, in-person liturgies. We hope to resume some forms of in-person, public liturgies beginning in July. We will continue to monitor public health guidance, directives from the Archdiocese and Xavier, and consult among the parish staff and community. Even when we resume in-person public liturgies, live streaming will continue so that those who decide to remain at home can still participate in our worship as a community.

I realize that this plan could further extend the separation that many of you feel from the Eucharist. The Eucharist is central to our lives as Catholics, but even so, I sincerely believe that waiting to resume in-person liturgies is the right decision given our local circumstances.

Despite the strangeness of this experience in our own lives, this has happened before. There are many examples in the history of the Church of communities and people who were separated from celebrating public liturgies in common. There are also many inspiring accounts of dedicated Christians who carried the Body of Christ out into the community, bringing the Eucharist to those who could not join the rest of the community.

This is a time for us to lean into this rich tradition as we work to create extensive networks of care where parishioners safely bring communion to the homebound. At this particular moment in history, “homebound” now includes most of the families in our parish.

We have an [online form where you can also sign up to have Eucharistic ministers come to your homes to distribute communion](#). These ministers will follow health and safety protocols and maintain social distance as they celebrate the communion rite in the domestic church. We will continue to break bread together via the livestreams and celebrate as the Body of Christ every week. If you are not yet a Eucharistic minister but would like to be trained in order to help your fellow parishioners, you can tell us on the form. The form will also allow you to share your thoughts regarding when and how you and your family would be ready to attend in-person public masses in the future.

I can not stress enough how consoled I am by the way our parish has responded to this crisis. You have given generously of your time, treasure, and talents to support the parish and those most in need. I have no doubt that your response to this new call to action will again amaze and astound us all.

The parish staff and volunteers have been working throughout the crisis to continue to develop new capacities to support deeper involvement in the life of the parish. Even in the midst of this pandemic, we are learning new ways to enhance our ministries and reach out to each other. These new patterns—both individual outreach and the use of digital tools won’t fade after the pandemic, but increase in importance and become vital ways for us all to remain connected and reach out to more families in the future.

Since our plans are constantly evolving, I encourage you [to check the bulletin and website for the latest updates](#). I look forward to seeing you all again soon. Until that time, please do everything you can to keep yourselves, your loved ones, and the most vulnerable among us safe and healthy.

Peace,  
Fr. Eric