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My dear brothers and sisters in the Risen Lord,

These past couple of months have been a truly extraordinary time. As the world struggled to come to terms with how best to respond to the pandemic, we have been unable to participate in the Mass and the Sacraments in the usual way. I know that this has been difficult for both our priests and the people they serve.

As many of you know, consistent with the Governor's Executive Order, we have begun offering drive-in Masses in a number of our locations. While we are presently only opening our churches for funerals, weddings, and baptisms, we are planning for the day when we will resume weekday and Lord's Day Masses. It will require many adjustments on the part of everyone, clergy and laity alike.

Please keep in mind that while our parish staffs will attempt to take appropriate precautions consistent with the advice of public health authorities, parishioners and guests should understand that they assume the risk of contracting COVID-19 anytime they enter a public space since such precautions do not eliminate the risk of infection.

I am immensely grateful for the work that has been done by the Archdiocese of Chicago, in conjunction with State and local leaders, to begin the formulating of a plan for the reopening of our churches. The Governor has pointed out that the spread of the deadly virus varies from one region of Illinois to another, and his plan for loosening the restrictions currently in place reflects this reality.

In the Diocese of Peoria, we have modeled our plan after the one developed for use in the Archdiocese of Chicago and have made adaptations that correspond to our region. In all cases, the requirements of the appropriate authorities are to be observed. I particularly wish to acknowledge and thank our partners at OSF HEALTHCARE who have made their Infectious Disease Team available to us and who have given their endorsement to this plan.

Please bear in mind that as the situation changes, from one county to the next, modifications may be necessary to the plan. We are working diligently to open our churches and provide you with the Sacraments in a way that reflects our love for God and our responsibilities to one another. As I have said before, we are striving at all times to conduct ourselves as devout believers and responsible citizens. We are all in this together.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

✠ Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
BISHOP OF PEORIA