from the Vicar General's Office

TO PASTORS AND ALL SHEPHERDS OF SOULS,

The Governor today (Nov. 13) issued a modified health order allowing houses of worship to accommodate the lesser of either: 1) 25% fire-marshall-rated capacity, or, 2) up to 75 persons for worship services. A large church such as the cathedral, for example, could accommodate no more than 75 persons.

While Archbishop Wester’s directive to suspend indoor Mass and limit attendance at other rites remains in effect, being cognizant that the Governor’s Office consults with many health professionals, and because of the expressed anguish of many of the faithful of not being able to attend Mass because of earlier-imposed restrictions, the Archbishop allows pastors to ease the severity of restrictions to those outlined in the Governor’s order, effective immediately, should they determine that local pandemic conditions so allow. However, desiring to work in cooperation with civil authorities because of the medical expertise available to them, restrictions may be increased when authorities determine such is necessary to safeguard lives.

Nonetheless, the Archbishop continues to strongly recommend that people remain home and away from gatherings, as danger of COVID infection not only continues, but has worsened dramatically in recent weeks. The dispensation to not attend weekly Mass remains. The elderly and those with underlying health conditions are especially encouraged to remain apart from any gatherings, availing themselves of scriptural and spiritual reading, prayer and widely-available televised/streaming Masses. The Archbishop asks ALL to observe extra precautions should they attend rites in churches or elsewhere. Certainly normal preventive protocols such as social-distancing, masks, disinfecting, etc., should be strictly observed, if not increased.

By direction,
Fr. Glenn Jones
Vicar General