



# T H E D I O C E S E O F H O U M A T H I B O D A U X

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## **DIOCESE OF HOUMA-THIBODAUX TO ALLOW OUTDOOR MASSES THIS WEEKEND**

Bishop Shelton Fabre has announced that the celebration of outdoor masses will be allowed this upcoming weekend, May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux. This decision comes days after Governor John Bel Edwards announced that he would allow outdoor religious celebrations, and the state fire marshal issued strict guidelines for the liturgies.

“Our people need hope at this time, and the Lord clearly called out to us to minister to the faithful during these difficult weeks in alternative ways,” said Bishop Fabre. “Beginning this weekend, we are blessed to share the Eucharist with them again in person.”

Bishop Fabre also made clear that until further notice, all Catholics in the diocese continue to remain dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Additionally, those who are sick or most vulnerable, especially the elderly, should not attend Mass and should continue to participate from home via livestreamed Masses.

The bishop and diocesan leadership also announced that outdoor Masses are not required of all church parishes, but rather are celebrated at the discretion of the individual pastors. Catholic faithful in the diocese are encouraged to visit the websites, social media, and other communications platforms of their respective church parish to learn of their plans.

Additionally, Bishop Fabre announced these requirements to attend an outdoor Mass this weekend:

- The lay faithful **MUST** bring their own cloth mask, which must be worn at all times
- Those who attend Mass outdoors **MUST** bring their own chairs
- Members of the same households may sit together without social distancing, but there must be a six-foot social distance between different households at all times
- Ushers will ensure that proper social distancing is respected
- The Sign of Peace will be observed during Mass, but without physical contact

The diocese also outlined additional guidelines regarding the distribution of Holy Communion:

- As the lay faithful process to receive Holy Communion, a six-foot social distance must be maintained
- As the communicant approaches the priest, deacon or lay extraordinary minister, they are to briefly remove their mask (and gloves if worn) before receiving Holy Communion
- Considering the health risks associated with COVID-19, the lay faithful are strongly urged to receive Holy Communion in the hand

Bishop Fabre also asked that the Catholic faithful of the diocese continue to pray for their priests, for their respective Church parishes, and for all who are ill or have died during this pandemic.