



**Diocese of Joliet - Coronavirus Update
Re-Opening Religious Education and Youth Ministry Programs
June 23, 2020**

My Dear Brother Priests,

We have certified the reopening of nearly every parish church in the diocese and resumed the public celebration of Mass. Last week, I announced that all diocesan high schools, grade schools and pre-schools will reopen physically in the Fall – and a school certification process is currently underway. I now ask that a similar process take place for all parish youth formation programs and ministries. We are committed as a diocese to ensure, to the best of our ability, the health and safety of all children and their families.

I have appointed a special task force, led by Fr. Burke Masters and the Office of Youth Formation, who will oversee this process which begins today. Youth Ministers and Directors of Religious Education will be asked to submit a reopening plan for each ministry or program for which they are responsible. This includes all child or teen ministries of the parish – from birth through high school. All ministries and programs will be permitted to reopen in the Fall once they have submitted a formulated reopening plan based on the **TEMPLATE** prepared for this category of ministry. The plan will be certified by Chris Nye and Alex Rechenmacher in conjunction with the Office of Youth Formation. You will receive a copy of the *Youth Formation Program Reopening Plan* with the **TEMPLATE** as soon as it is available.

Your pastoral leadership and guidance are essential to the smooth reopening of all parish ministries and functions. I encourage you to facilitate a collaborative approach among the leaders of your parish and work to establish open dialogue between all programs and ministries that hope to reopen this Fall.

I pray that you remain close to the Heart of Jesus and faithful to the mission entrusted to your care. I extend to you my heart-felt appreciation for all you are doing as we navigate together the challenges we all face.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Joliet