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August 25, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The last six months have been a time of incredible challenge for our parishes and schools. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have adapted to new ways of worshiping, new ways of learning, new ways of “being Church” to one another. The evolving nature of the pandemic requires sound planning for the future that is adaptable to changing circumstances.

As parishes prepare to resume programming for youth and adults, the Diocese of St. Cloud and its staff seek to be supportive resources. This includes providing a framework and guidance for reopening. The “Parish/Diocesan Ministries COVID-19 Preparedness Guidance” accompanying this letter seeks to ensure consistency across the diocese as well as the health and safety of youth, families, staff and other community members. It complements documents previously issued for worship and Catholic schools. Please read it carefully and follow it.

In all areas of ministry, I am committed to following our state’s safety protocols and public health mandates — not just because it’s the law, but because it’s the right thing to do. Following these requirements is consistent with two important Catholic values: protecting human life and serving the common good. While some pandemic requirements may seem burdensome and inconvenient, we follow them because this is how we model Gospel values of care and compassion for others, particularly our most vulnerable populations.

We may not be able to do ministry the way we always have, but we shouldn’t be doing less. The work of DREs, catechists and youth ministers is crucial right now. We need to be innovative, creative and adaptable. Pastors and parish staff must support one another. Within your ACCs and regions, please work together, collaborate and share resources whenever possible. Brainstorm new and effective ways to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with your parishioners.

By working together, we will be a stronger and better Church — and a role model for others during this challenging time. May God bless you in your ministry.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Donald J. Kettler  
Bishop of Saint Cloud