



DIOCESE *of* GAYLORD

OFFICE *of the* BISHOP

February 25, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

For many, the most beloved of family memories are those times when we've "come home" for the holidays or special occasions to be with family and friends. We all deeply long to be loved, and home is the place where we find belonging, joy and fulfillment. We are grateful that modern technology has allowed us to *virtually* be "home" for many things this past year, in these times when we haven't been able to be fully present with our family, friends, and even with our Lord when we've been unable to attend Mass in person.

Yet, we know that no digital experience could ever take the place of being physically present with those that we love. Like we have longed to hug our families, I believe our Lord longs for us to be physically present with him again, to the extent that we are able. He makes himself fully present to us in a most beautiful way — body, blood, soul and divinity — through the Eucharist, in a way that no virtual celebration could ever accomplish for us.

In this season of Lent, as we prepare to celebrate our Lord's passion and resurrection, I invite you to *come home* and return to our celebrations of Mass in a safe and prayerful environment. I invite you to come home to full communion with your Father, who yearns to be with you and to bring you hope and peace.

Be encouraged that, in our parishes, we will continue all safety precautions to ensure that everyone who is able can return in person. Masks will continue to be required, we will remain socially distanced and continue extensive sanitizing. For our brothers and sisters who are still unable to physically return, the dispensation remains in place and the virtual celebration of the Mass will still be available. It is my prayer that more and more in these coming weeks, we can begin to fully share together, once again, in the Eucharistic celebration.

Recently, the Archdiocese of Detroit shared two excellent [videos](#) reminding us that all are welcomed home. These illustrate how, like our biological families, our family of faith is a precious gift and our parish home is a place of belonging, where our relationships with God and others were meant to flourish. The greatest of these relationships is that with Christ.

This Lenten season, let us prepare our hearts for the Lord and prayerfully consider how we can become fully present to him, as he is for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley
Apostolic Administrator