
COVID-19 Coronavirus: Slovakia, Catholic Church slowly returns to public liturgical services. Bishop's appeal for kindness and respect

(Bratislava) - After a six-week pause, the Catholic Church in Slovakia can finally resume its public liturgical celebrations under strict hygienic rules applying to both clergy and believers. The first holy masses in the presence of people were celebrated yesterday, and parishes report that believers tend to be very cautious and respectful when it comes to contact with others. "I think that we all realize very well how necessary it is to be patient and disciplined", says Mgr. Stanislav Zvolensky, president of the Bishops' Conference. Although online spiritual services were very useful during the time of closure, bishops and priests do not conceal their joy over the fact that it is now possible to meet again at liturgical celebrations in churches. "Perhaps it will be like meeting someone dear after returning home from a long journey. I guess that we all will be a little touched after such a long time of fasting without the Eucharist, joint prayers or singing. We all shall draw strength from the source of holy sacraments and the spirit of community", says Msgr. Bernard Bober, archbishop of Kosice. Due to the strict conditions and the churches' limited capacity, participation at liturgical services on Sundays and feasts is not compulsory, and the bishops invite the faithful to respect the official rules set by parish administrators: "Let us show kindness and a sense of self-sacrifice rooted in our Christian faith".

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