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**DIOCESE OF  
ROCKFORD**

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# PRESS RELEASE

## Catholics Are Being Invited Back to Mass

DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD—Church attendance is a concern for almost every faith denomination. And the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the problem of getting people to church and now *back* to church.

Now that vaccines are readily available and community spread of COVID in the U.S. is at an all-time low, it's safer to get back to group activities.

The Diocese of Rockford and all its priests and parishes want to invite Catholics back to the joy of celebrating Mass in-person especially as the Lenten season begins.

"Getting an invitation is always a special thing. It lets us know something special is happening," said Penny Wiegert, director of Communication. "Mass is always a special event and we want everyone to know they are welcome and they are invited," she said.

That is the idea behind the new media campaign inviting Catholics back to Mass especially as the church begins the Lenten and Easter seasons.

"Just like our diocesan Be Reconciled Program which invites Catholics to the sacrament of reconciliation, we want Catholics to know they are welcome, they are invited and most of all they are important to God and to all of their brothers and sisters in Christ," Wiegert said.

Bishop of Rockford David Malloy and the priests of the diocese have been concerned for some months about the reluctance of people to come back to the public celebration of Mass, and that is how the idea to invite them through a media campaign was born.

"We just want Catholics to know that they need to receive the graces of coming to Mass and that we want them with us. Especially in this time when the Church in the U.S. is focusing on a Eucharistic Revival, we want people, together with the support of their fellow Catholics, to hear the message of Christ in our Gospel messages and receive Him worthily in the Eucharist. None of us can expect to continue to grow in strength and love for God without regularly being nourished through the Word and the Body of Christ," Bishop Malloy said. "The purpose of this campaign, like Be Reconciled, is to help people grow and stay close to Christ," he added.

Because of this, a message of invitation is being issued through television, radio, and social media ads. The 30 second ad invites Catholics to find a Catholic Church family near them and come home to Mass. Catholic Churches and their locations can be easily found at [www.rockforddiocese.org](http://www.rockforddiocese.org).

\*\*Established in 1908, the Diocese of Rockford is comprised of 105 parishes in Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, JoDaviess, Kane, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago Counties in Northern Illinois serving a Catholic population of more than 400,000. For more about the Catholic Diocese of Rockford visit [www.rockforddiocese.org](http://www.rockforddiocese.org).