

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

# What Catholics Need to Know Now.



18 March 2020

Key personnel of the Archdiocese (Priests, Deacons, Principals, Parish Staff Members),

As promised in the communication from yesterday, the following is the next piece in a series of communications to help you navigate these difficult and unprecedented times in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Because we recognize the very real consequences that may come from sustained physical separation from your community due to the suspension of public Masses and limitation of gatherings, we feel that your first priority remains **engagement with your parish (& school) community through all means still available to you**. To that end, we offer the following guidance:

### Assess your current financial situation

- If you don't do it already, now is the time to start doing cash flow projections – and figuring out what your cash runway is based on your projected decline in income. You can find a template for developing a cash flow projection attached to this email. Please use the Parish Finance team as a resource if you run into questions or problems when preparing your cash flow projection. You can always reach this team by emailing Ernie Armstrong at [ernie.armstrong@archden.org](mailto:ernie.armstrong@archden.org).
- Consider budget impacts of the current crisis which may extend into next fiscal year. Keep in mind that you can lessen the impact of the current reduction in revenue by considering budgeted items for next fiscal year that could be eliminated or postponed. To get you started, the Archbishop has decided not to increase priest's salaries for next fiscal year.
- For school situations: Consider the impact of reduced tuition revenue and contributions, either due to monthly payments stopping now or reimbursements being made to cover a potential closure through the end of the academic year. What would be the dollar impact if your fundraising efforts (i.e. galas, other events) were cancelled this fiscal year? Please send this information to Ernie Armstrong and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

### Minimize your reduction in revenue

Engagement with your parish community will be critical in maintaining strong offertory during this time, and, developing a specific on-line engagement strategy is a necessity for every parish. Some ideas for increased engagement include:

1. Remind parishioners about electronic giving options in lieu of weekly envelopes or to continue to mail in their weekly envelopes to the parish. The key is to specifically ask your parishioners to give during this crisis period. Do not be afraid to express urgency and ask unapologetically. If you need help setting up online giving, see below in the "Ask for Help" section for options to receive help from us.
2. Ask parishioners to update their contact information, especially their email addresses.
3. Review your ability to livestream services. In lieu of an in-person Mass, parishes could offer a Mass via livestream, Facebook Live, or a pre-recorded video posted on your website. A Friday stations of the cross should also be made available. Homilies and petitions should mention the need to support the church. **Include an invitation to give electronically during the presentation of the gifts with enough time for livestream participants to complete an online donation.**
4. Encourage parishioners to bookmark your website and "Like" your Facebook page.

5. Demonstrate to parishioners what is being done to help people impacted by COVID-19 so they see the work being done. Include specific stories of families helped to personalize services.
6. Use Flocknote, social media, and any other communication vehicles regularly and always include an online giving link. Mention cost savings measures that you are implementing.
7. To the extent that school tuition reduction or refunds are requested, communicate to parents that you and the Office of Catholic Schools recognize the hardships, financial and otherwise, parishes, schools, and individual families are experiencing. As such, we are working through the best way to support families during these uncertain times, including more comprehensive guidance should further action need to be taken regarding school tuition.

### **Eliminate non-essential spending**

- Halt all hiring for now.
- Immediately freeze or eliminate all non-essential spending.
- The Archdiocese is evaluating other means of support. Further guidance will be released on this as needs develop. This support may include deferrals of Cathedralricum and other assessments, deferrals of benefit premiums, and/or low or no interest short term loans.

### **Utilize reserves, if necessary**

Assess reserves on hand. You should have a minimum of 6 months reserves set aside to be used in times of uneven cash flow. Now is the time to access these reserves to help navigate any reduction in inflows you may experience. Only withdraw what you need as you need it.

- Avoid or limit the use of Revolving Fund moneys as these funds are important for the support of parish projects.
- Avoid or limit the use of Catholic Foundation accounts or other long-term investments as these funds are invested and are most likely being negatively impacted by recent downturn in the market.

### **Ask for help**

- If you think, based on your cash projections, you will start running into cash problems, please alert us and your parish finance council as soon as possible. Also, please assemble documentation such as current financial statements, documents that show trends in parishioner giving, past & projected cash flow, etc.
- The Archdiocese and its Parish Finance office are open for business with some people telecommuting and others in the office.
- If your website was set up by the Marketing team and/or you already have an electronic giving platform, contact them at <https://denverparish.org/connect>, they can help you set up a link.
- If you do not have an established means to receive electronic/online giving contact the Office of Development at (720) 476- 7468, they can help you put something in place immediately.

### **Please reach out if you have any questions on this communication.**

Next up, expect to hear from Beth Link in Thursday's communication about HR Considerations. We are here to work with you through this crisis and we pray for the safety and well-being of all.

In Christ,  
Keith Parsons, Chief Operating Officer  
Brenda Cannella, Chief Financial Officer  
Paul Dudzic, Chief Development Officer