

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What Catholics Need to Know Now.



20 March 2020

Priests and Deacons of the Archdiocese (and those who assist them),

Since it has been ordered that all gatherings be limited to 10 people until April 17, the guidance in this alert is intended to address this time period. Many of you have found ways to be spiritually present to your people and that is a great source of comfort for them. We are all aware that it is inevitable that as this crisis evolves, changes are made sometimes hourly and certainly daily, which means we will do our best to update our guidance to coincide with any national or state directives.

Mass and the Distribution of Communion

- The suspension of public Masses will continue until at least April 17. The faithful should be provided with access to livestream or prerecorded Masses and instructed in making spiritual communion (see Domestic Church section below). A list of livestream options in the Archdiocese can be found at: <https://archden.org/coronavirus/mass-video/>
 - We recommend using public domain music during livestream and recorded services.
 - OCP and OneLicense.net are waiving fees for using their music during livestreamed and recorded services. Please see their websites for information.
- Do not innovate methods for distributing Communion outside of Mass. Such practices can promote a casual attitude toward the reception of the Eucharist. Communion is always accompanied by a Rite, the fullness of which is the Sacrifice of the Mass. “Drive-thru” or “carry-out” practices are inappropriate.
- Priests may celebrate one Mass per day honoring one intention and receiving the offering. Unfulfilled Masses should be tracked, and they should be fulfilled after the crisis.
 - Per the Pastoral Handbook (2.2.11.6.) twice a week a priest may combine multiple intentions (with the written permission of the AB, which this letter constitutes). In order to do this with requests, the person who asked for the Mass (and paid the offering) needs to be consulted. Calling people and reorganizing the Mass intentions can be a good task for an employee whose work has been limited or is hourly.
- During the weekdays of Lent where there are no solemnities or feasts, the Archbishop grants permission for use of the Mass prayers from Mass in Any Need Number 48 in the Roman Missal, as well as Mass for the Sick Number 45. The readings from Lent and Prefaces for Lent must be used. *Note: you may use the Reconciliation Eucharistic Prayers with the Prefaces for Lent.*

Holy Week and Easter

- Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil: all of these liturgies may be celebrated in private gatherings of 10 people or less; they may be livestreamed (not recorded). **Extensive guidance is presented in a decree from the Holy See attached to the email.**
- A livestream of the Chrism Mass from the Cathedral will be made available, more information to follow regarding the distribution of oils.
- A livestream of the Triduum celebrated by the Archbishop will be available for viewing.
- Priests may celebrate the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday Mass, but they don't have to celebrate both.
- Unless requested otherwise, the celebration of the Rites of Christian Initiation will take place at all parishes during the Pentecost Vigil (May 30). Liturgical resources are being put together.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is still encouraged, but only if it follows the guidelines of not having 10 or more people with the proper spacing. Adoration can be livestreamed too as Pope Francis has done in Rome. The priest must be present and vested and provide benediction at the end. As always, social distancing guidelines should be followed.
- Parishes where Adoration is typically held in smaller chapels should consider moving it to the larger church to adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Eucharistic processions are discouraged, but if they are held, they should be unannounced, simple, and make use of as few people as possible, while maintaining necessary decorum.

Anointing of the Sick

- Priests should make themselves available for anointings as they will be in greater demand.
- Contact the location you will be visiting to understand their procedures for entrance.
- The use of an instrument, such as a glove or cotton swab is allowed for the anointing.
 - A medical glove with OI on the thumb can be placed in a Ziplock bag and carried into the location where the anointing occurs.
 - A double-sided sheet with the Rite of Anointing is included with this email. This sheet could be printed for single use and thrown away after the sacrament is celebrated.
- Deans should coordinate for younger, less vulnerable, priests to do anointings.

Confessions

As a reminder, confessions must take place in person. Confessions are not permitted over electronic media including telephones or video conference.

- So long as Churches remain open, do your best to establish social distancing for those going to confession by having markers on the floor every 6 to 7 feet. For the safety of everyone, Confessions are only to be heard behind the screen.
- Temporarily move out of the confessional if it is in a small space and provide confessions in a larger room always behind a screen so that distancing can be easily maintained.
- Further guidance on doing Confessions by appointment is attached to the email.
- Instruct the faithful to make an act of contrition and seek out confession when available.

Funerals

- Private Funerals with Mass may be celebrated with the immediate family only. A public memorial Mass can be scheduled later.
- Mt. Olivet is still doing burials; you will need to check with other cemeteries if they are open.
- If the remains are cremated, consider postponing the funeral.

Weddings

- Weddings may be celebrated with immediate family only.
- Later, the Order of Blessing a Married Couple within Mass on the Anniversary of Marriage could be adapted to celebrate a Mass where the couple can affirm their vows publicly.
- Otherwise, couples may reschedule their weddings.

Confirmation

- All Confirmation Masses are postponed indefinitely.
- If necessary, pastors may be delegated to confirm later in the year.

Baptism

- Infant baptisms may continue to be celebrated with immediate family and godparents only.
- New water is to be blessed for each baptism. If more than one baptism is being celebrated at the same time, water can be blessed in individual vessels to be poured over the child.
- Adult baptisms should be celebrated at an appropriate time in the future.

Churches

- Churches may remain open for private prayer following established operating hours, so long as no more than 10 people assemble in the same space and they observe social distancing.
- If you determine it is best to close the church due to local circumstances, do your best to communicate this to your parishioners.

Faith Formation Gatherings and Classes

- At this time, all in-person gatherings of more than 10 people have been suspended; further, small group gatherings for faith formation and sacrament preparation are discouraged. It is highly recommended to gather as small groups digitally using videoconference technology.
- Please visit <https://archden.org/coronavirus/mass-video/> for free digital faith formation resources.
- Please note that many of Catholic Schools, Universities, the Catholic Biblical School, and even the Pontifical Universities in Rome are all using virtual classrooms which can easily be set up on computers so there can be interaction between the professor/teacher and the students.

Cultivating the Domestic Church

Keeping the Sabbath holy should remain a focus. In our world, adherence to the 3rd Commandment has often become checking off the “Mass” box, which is a poor adherence to God’s law. This time can be an opportunity for families to observe a more complete Sabbath. A few suggestions are:

- Watch a prerecorded or livestream Mass or doing an in-home celebration of the word, and making a spiritual communion is to be highly promoted.
 - Check out this article by Dr. Edward Sri for a template of how to celebrate Sunday as a family: <https://edwardsri.com/2020/03/13/17088/>
 - You can find the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/readings> or through <http://www.magnificat.net/free>
 - If you are looking for hymns to sing, here are three great resources:
 - <https://hymnary.org/browse/popular>
 - <https://ocp.org/en-us>
- Family rosaries, novenas, the angelus, liturgy of the hours, and other devotionals should become regular aspects of the daily life of the faithful.
 - Tools and tips from the USCCB: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/parents/tools-for-building-a-domestic-church.cfm>
 - Liturgy of the Hours can be prayed throughout the day (divineoffice.org, ibreviary.com, ebreviary.com, keepthelordsday.com) Hymns for the Liturgy of the Hours: <http://kpsshaw.blogspot.com/2013/08/thematic.html>

Once again, thank you for your dedication. May the Lord make his face shine upon you.

In Christ,

Archbishop Aquila

Fr. Randy Dollins, Vicar General

Hung Pham, Director of Liturgy

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