



March 16, 2020

Dear Faithful of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

We continue to be mindful of the latest recommendations from our health departments and the CDC. With the latest directive from CDC asking that public gatherings be limited to no more than 50 people, I am providing you the latest directives with regard to the celebration of Mass and other sacraments.

Effective Wednesday, March 18, I am suspending the public celebration of Masses throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, through Friday, April 3. This includes weekday and Sunday Masses. I ask that priests still celebrate Mass in their parishes, without an assembly, including the Sunday “pro populo” Masses as required by canon law.

This is a big decision and I don’t make it lightly. As Catholics, the Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives. In times of public crisis, people naturally turn to the Church for spiritual direction, and we need to continue to do whatever we can to support people through prayer. However, taking precautionary measures is a prudent course of action. I would ask that, where possible, our churches remain open for private prayer and that our people reserve some part of their day for private prayer or devotions.

Liturgy for weddings, funerals and baptisms should still be celebrated, but you should work with families to try and limit attendance at these events. Communal reconciliation services should be canceled and confessions should be limited to individual confession. The 12 hours of Reconciliation across the archdiocese on April 1, will continue as scheduled. For those in RCIA, the archbishop has dispensed individuals from the scrutinies.

All non-essential Parish gatherings should be postponed, including fish fries. Schools are discontinuing face-to-face instruction this week and Religious Education programs should also stop for the time being. All of these measures will be re-evaluated on April 1, with additional communication at that time.

The Chrism Mass scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, will not be celebrated publicly. I will celebrate the Mass with our auxiliary bishops and live-stream it. The oils will be blessed and consecrated and information will be shared with you later about how we will get the oils to parishes.

Economically, we know CoVID19/coronavirus will have a negative impact on our parishes and schools. Our development office will be reaching out to parishes with assistance with on-line giving and other strategies. To help parishes with cash flow, payments for parish assessments, pension contributions and the participant indemnity plan, can be delayed

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until July 1, 2020. Those parishes/schools in the St. Raphael Health Plan, will receive a “premium holiday” for the month of April. These are small measures, but hopefully they will provide some relief.

In addition, I am implementing a work-from-home plan for our archdiocesan offices/staff. We will be limiting the number of people at the Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center. Staff will work remotely in their day-to-day responsibilities to serve you.

Two Sunday Masses at the Cathedral will still be celebrated but without an assembly. The 9 a.m. Mass is available on Radio 920 AM, WOLF, and the 11 a.m. Mass is live-streamed on the Cathedral website. Other TV Masses are available on WVTM, My24 at 7 a.m. and 9 a.m., and on WITI Fox 6, at 5:30 a.m.

Lastly, let us hold each other in prayer during this time of concern, asking Mary Help of Christians to intercede on our behalf. Together we can pray this Spiritual Act of Communion.

#### An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,  
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never  
permit me to be separated from You.  
Amen.

With the assurance of prayers, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Jerome E. Listecki  
Archbishop of Milwaukee

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