

GESU CATHOLIC CHURCH

Friday, March 13, 2020

To: Gesu Parish Community

Re: **Coronavirus—Suspension of Masses until Monday, April 6, 2020**

I pray for Christ's blessings on all of you during this very difficult time in our city, country and world. Please remember that God is with us always, and our trust in Him will see us through these trials related to the Coronavirus. I urge you to take care of yourselves and your loved ones by following the guidelines below, and to use good judgment if you visit public places, attend events and make travel plans. But, above all, I invite all of us to put everything into God's hands. Our God is in control and will take care of us. It is important, therefore, not to succumb to the hysteria that makes us forget our faith and our love for our fellow human beings. Let us all pray for a swift end to this health crisis.

I want to let you know about the latest development related to the Coronavirus issue: **Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron announced this afternoon the temporary suspension of publicly-celebrated masses. This means that effective immediately, all masses in the Archdiocese of Detroit will be suspended until Monday, April 6, 2020.** This, of course, also means there will be no masses celebrated at Gesu until that date. During this time, members of the faithful are urged to keep holy the Lord's Day by making an act of [Spiritual Communion](#), a devotional practice of uniting oneself in prayer with Christ's sacrifice when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion.

The Archdiocese has also instructed that all faith formation meetings and other parish activities be suspended until the same date, April 6th. This means that no meetings or other activities will take place on the grounds or in the facilities of Gesu Church and School.

Please note that the Archdiocese has taken all of these steps after consultation with the best medical experts, public health officials, and government leaders as they seek to keep the number of those infected from significantly increasing and to ensure that our health-care facilities do not become overwhelmed.

We do, however, plan to have the main church open for private prayer during this period for those who desire to pray in our reverent house of worship. The church will be closed tomorrow, Saturday, March 14th, but the church will be open this Sunday, March 15th from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm. We will inform you early next week as to the days/hours during which the church will be open for private prayer in the coming weeks.

Finally, it is important to note that this plan is subject to change as the situation involving the Coronavirus continues to develop. In the meantime, the Gesu parish offices will still be open (with some limited hours, which have yet to be determined). Please note that Gesu School will also be closed until Monday, April 6th, although instruction will continue online as much as possible.

General reminders about the Coronavirus:

What is Coronavirus? Coronavirus causes respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The disease may cause mild to moderate illness in some people. In others, it may cause more severe illness, with signs of infection that can include pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and, in some cases, death. The virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

How the virus spreads: The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about six feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of the emerging Coronavirus at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

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Symptoms: Those with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath.

Protection against the virus: People can help protect themselves by employing simple preventative actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick; maintain reasonable distance from others to avoid exposure.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least twenty seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

If you are sick:

- Call your doctor first (or call 911). Do not simply show up at your doctor's office or at a hospital. Stay at home otherwise.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

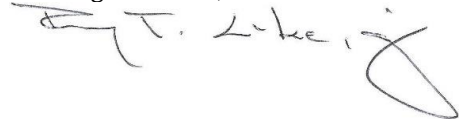
Treatment: There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. At this point, those who are sick should seek medical care (as directed above) in order to relieve symptoms.

What steps you should take: Parishioners, volunteers and staff should take common-sense preventative actions:

- Anyone feeling ill should stay home when sick and seek medical care (as directed above).
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Be sure to avoid using your hands to do this; instead, use a tissue (and immediately dispose of it) or your inner elbow (do not use your hands to cover coughs/sneezes).
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Wash hands often.
- To avoid unwittingly exposing yourself to the Coronavirus, be careful about being in close physical proximity with other individuals.
- Do not travel to areas where the Coronavirus is known to be spreading.
- Stay calm. On a relative scale, there still have been few cases reported in the United States, and with due diligence, the spread of this virus will be curtailed.

Please don't hesitate to contact a member of the parish staff if you have further questions or concerns. Most importantly, please remember that this crisis will pass, and that all good things are possible with God!

Blessings in Christ,



Fr. Phillip Cooke, S.J.
Pastor