



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

DECREE

On March 13, 2020, in light of the growing concern over the Coronavirus, I issued a decree temporarily suspending masses and closing Diocesan schools, among other precautions. On March 24, 2020, following the Shelter-in-Place order issued in Dallas County, additional guidelines were released. On March 31, 2020 the Governor of Texas issued an Executive Order, viewing religious services as essential. Therefore, at this time, in consultation with local authorities, and out of a desire to help combat the virus and limit the flock from exposure or risk, aware that many events by their nature attract large numbers of people, I hereby decree the following:

- **Public Masses** remain temporarily suspended. As public Masses draw large crowds, Masses and other devotions will continue to be livestreamed where possible. In addition to parishes, the Diocese continues to broadcast live masses and recorded events on the Diocese of Dallas website and local television. During such Masses, there will be an act of spiritual communion.
- **All Catholics of the Diocese of Dallas** remain dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass “on Sundays and other holy days of Obligation” (canon 1247).
- The **Pastoral Center** will remain closed, and telecommuting for essential services will continue.
- **Diocesan schools** will remain closed, and e-learning is to continue, until further notice.
- There are to be **no scheduled gatherings** at the church or on church grounds during this time period, although the church building may remain physically open at times during the daytime hours if this is practicable.
- **Public Adoration** of the Blessed Sacrament remains temporarily suspended, since public adoration can attract large numbers. Pastors should provide resources on the parish website or elsewhere for private prayer and spiritual communion. The Diocese of Dallas website also contains a number of resources.
- **Scheduled Confessions** at the church, which can cause groups to form large lines, remain temporarily suspended. Individual requests in person can be responded to by priests.
- **Perfect Contrition:** The Diocese has published a resource on Perfect Contrition that should be helpful to the faithful who are unable to seek the Sacrament of Confession. It is located [here](#). Perfect Contrition, as articulated by the Catechism in paragraph 1452 and most recently by the Holy Father, “arises from a love by which God is loved above all else” and especially in cases where sacramental confession is not immediately available “obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.”
- **Confession, Communion as Viaticum and Anointing of the Sick** are to be given in danger of death where possible. In the event where COVID-19 is indicated, appropriate measures will be taken.

- All **Confirmations** scheduled through the end of April will be postponed to a later date.
- **Baptisms** are to be postponed, except in emergency situations. As a reminder, in the case of emergency, any person can perform a baptism. Please see the following [document](#) for such cases. It is available [here](#) in Spanish.
- **Weddings**, including Convalidations, should be rescheduled. If this is not possible, they should be celebrated privately without mass and with no more than 10 people in attendance, including the priest or deacon.
- **Quinceañeras** are to be postponed.
- **All other parish gatherings** are to remain cancelled at this time.
- **Funeral services** will be limited to a graveside service with immediate family only and are not to exceed 10 people in total, including the minister and the funeral director staff.
 - Memorial Masses will be celebrated at a later date once the crisis passes.
 - It is strongly recommended that no one from a vulnerable population attend a funeral service.
 - Social distancing (six feet) is to be observed with attendees at all times.
 - **Wakes and Viewings** will not be possible at this time.
 - No pre- or post-service social gathering is allowed in parish buildings or on parish property.

Additional Holy Week and Easter guidelines have been published and appear on the Diocesan website. **This Decree remains in effect until May 1, 2020 unless it is modified or revoked.**

Let us all continue to pray with confidence and remain focused on Christ's glorious resurrection during this incredibly difficult time. "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." – Philippians 4:6-7.

Given on March 31, 2020 in the Diocese of Dallas.



Gregory Caridi
Chancellor



Most Reverend Edward J. Burns
Bishop of Dallas