



DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES

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THE CHANCERY

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COVID-19 Update #3

To: All Parishes/Parishioners in the Diocese of St. Catharines

From: Most Reverend Gerard Bergie

Date: March 17, 2020

Re: **COVID-19 Pastoral Practices**

Further to the directives in my memo of March 16, 2020 and effectively immediately:

The 11:30 am Sunday Mass at the Cathedral will be livestreamed beginning Sunday, March 29, on the Diocesan website www.saintcd.com.

All Masses are cancelled until April 18, 2020, including weekday Masses.

Funeral Masses and Receptions in parishes are not permitted until further notice.

The Rite of Committal may be celebrated at the cemetery with immediate family members present.

- A Funeral Mass (i.e. in the presence of the body or cremated remains) or Memorial Mass (i.e. without the presence of the body or cremated remains) may be celebrated at a later time.
- Vigil Prayers and Funeral Liturgies at funeral homes are permitted with the limitations given by public health guidelines. Funeral homes are mandated to limit visitor numbers to 50, and are advising people to maintain a social distance of 2 meters.
- It is permissible that a family member or friend livestream the Vigil Prayers, Funeral Liturgy, Rite of Committal for people who are not able to attend in person.

Baptism

The Sacrament of Baptism may be celebrated privately with immediate family members present. Communal celebrations are to be postponed until further notice.

Marriage

All Marriage Preparation Courses have been cancelled until the end of May. Couples to be married before they can complete a course are permitted to celebrate their marriage with immediate family members present. They may wish to take part in a course at a later date.

Priests and deacons should continue to bring Communion to the homebound.

As much as possible, please try to have contact with parishioners who are isolated and may be in need of reassurance and/or practical assistance (errands/groceries) which a team of parishioners might provide.

Parish staff should be permitted to work from home if this is practical. If your parish staff or their family members are self-isolating, their pay should not be affected. Absences related to COVID-19 are not to be counted as sick days.

Confirmations that were scheduled for April have been rescheduled.

If you have parish event cancellations, please advise us so that we can post these on the diocesan website and on Facebook.

Spiritual Communion:

Catholics are reminded that during this extraordinary time, they are dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass. People are encouraged to make an Act of Spiritual Communion with the following prayer:

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.

The Catholic Centre will be open 9am – 12noon, Monday to Friday, with reduced staff, until further notice. The phones and emails will be checked for messages regularly.