



DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES

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THE CHANCERY

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COVID-19 Update # 2

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

From: Most Reverend Gerard Bergie

Date: March 16, 2020

Re: COVID -19 Pastoral Practices

The situation surrounding the COVID-19 virus is fluid and changing on a daily basis. Please continue to pray for those affected and for our health-care workers and facilities. We have yet to feel the full onslaught of the disease and the full impact on our people.

Effective immediately, the following Pastoral Practices in the Diocese of St. Catharines are in effect. All other practices in my memo of March 12, 2020 remain in full force and effect.

Sunday Liturgies, Chrism Mass and Holy Week

Out of an abundance of caution, all Sunday Masses are cancelled immediately until April 18, 2020. I grant all the faithful a dispensation from their Sunday obligation.

Holy Week Liturgies are cancelled.

The Chrism Mass, scheduled for April 7, 2020 is cancelled.

Arrangements are being made to live stream one Sunday mass from the Cathedral. Liturgies for Holy Week will be also live streamed. Further information will be forthcoming.

All non-essential parish meetings, outside groups, educational seminars and social events are cancelled until further notice.

Daily Mass

The celebration of daily Mass may continue under the following circumstances and until further notice:

The main church must be used for the celebration. Daily Mass chapels are not to be used. Persons attending shall sit a minimum of two (2) metres apart front to rear and side to side. Those persons over the age of 60 and/or those with underlying medical conditions should remain at home.

Marriages

The setting of dates for new marriage celebrations is postponed until further notice.

Marriages already scheduled may take place but are limited to immediate family only: parents, siblings, Best Man and Maid of Honour and one other attendant each. No more than Fifty (50) persons in total are permitted to attend, sitting a minimum of two (2) metres apart front to back and side to side. Those with underlying medical conditions should remain at home.

Baptisms

The celebration of Baptisms shall be postponed until further notice unless the child or person is in danger of death.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation may continue with the following changes. Priests should wear an N-95 mask or other approved mask to prevent the transmission of the virus and/or remain a minimum of two (2) metres away from the penitent. Where possible a secure and sanitary cover may be placed over the confessional screen.

Funerals

Funerals may continue to be celebrated with the following changes. Attendance at funeral Masses shall be limited to immediate family of the deceased, or no more than Fifty (50) persons sitting a minimum of two (2) metres apart front to back and side to side. Priests should travel in their own car to the place of committal. Those with underlying medical conditions should remain at home.

Confirmations

All confirmations scheduled up to and including April 18, 2020 have been rescheduled. Dates for confirmations after April 18 may need to be rescheduled as circumstances dictate.

We will continue to monitor the situation, and be attentive to the direction and advice of our public health officials. If further measures are required or recommended, we will communicate this to parishes and post the information on the diocesan website www.saintcd.com.