



Liturgical Directives and Accommodations
During the Suspension of the Public Celebration of Mass
Due to Increased Concerns Over the Coronavirus Outbreak
Dated March 18, 2020

The current public health emergency has brought about fears and anxiety in the hearts and minds of many people. At the same time, it has also unified us as a people seeking the good of others. In these trying times, we must lean upon our Lord with faith that is to be lived with reason, prudence, and wise judgment.

Therefore, in order to help priests and other ministers perform their ministry with faith, prudence, and wise judgment, Bishop Parkes, in consultation with the Bishops of the Province of Miami (state of Florida) and with his Executive Staff, has established the following liturgical directives and accommodations, which are to be followed until further notice:

MASS

- As stated in a separate letter from Bishop Parkes, dated today, March 18, 2020, the public celebration of Masses in the Diocese of St. Petersburg has been suspended until it can be determined that it is safe to return to normal schedules and public worship. Churches may remain open for private prayer observing their normal open/closure hours. A notice should be placed at the entrance of the church, to provide adequate instruction to the faithful who visit. The notice should include hours in which the church is open, as well as a reminder for visitors to keep hands washed and to avoid “high-touch” surfaces, where possible.
- Parishes are invited to inform their parishioners of opportunities to view the Mass via livestream. For a listing of parishes offering Masses via livestream and for information on Mass broadcasts on TV and radio, visit the following webpage: www.catholicmassonline.org/.
- Priests are reminded to encourage the faithful to keep the Lord’s Day holy. Some ways to do this include reading the Scriptures, praying the Rosary and/or other devotional prayers individually or with your families, and joining yourself to the sacrifice of the Mass by making an act of spiritual communion. Numerous prayer aids may be found by visiting our diocesan Coronavirus resource page: <https://www.dosp.org/coronavirus/>.
- During this time, priests are expected to privately celebrate Mass daily for the intentions of the faithful. Any additional private or home celebrations of the Mass with members of the faithful are not permitted.

- If you have difficulty satisfying Mass intentions, please contact the Office of the Chancellor for further guidance.

RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION

- Parishes are to cancel all Lenten penance services. However, priests are asked to continue offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation according to the parish's regularly established reconciliation times or consider including additional opportunities for Reconciliation.
- Consider offering confessions in spaces other than small confessionals. Please observe good spacing between the penitent and priest, while at the same time observing privacy for the penitent. Those waiting for the priest are asked to observe "social distancing."

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

- Priests are to attend to the needs of those who ask for the Anointing of the Sick. If a priest is sick or considered to be a high-risk individual (e.g. elderly, suffers from respiratory conditions, immunocompromised, etc.), he should request assistance from another priest.
- Priests attending to the needs of the sick are to observe all proper sanitary protocols and, if necessary, check-in with proper medical personnel before entering the room of the patient.
- For the time being, sick calls and distribution of Holy Communion for the homebound are reserved to priests only. A pastor may delegate a deacon for visitation to the sick and distribution of Holy Communion if a priest is not available to do so.
- Priests are asked to clean and refresh their oil stocks before visiting the sick.

BAPTISM

- Unless in case of emergency, celebrations of the Sacrament of Baptism are to be postponed.

WEDDINGS

- Weddings can be celebrated. Couples should work with their priest to determine the most prudent means to do so. Also, as much as possible the guidance about limiting gatherings ought to be observed. If you have additional questions concerning weddings, please contact Father Joseph Waters, Judicial Vicar, at (813) 503-2380 or by e-mail: jlw@dosp.org.

FUNERALS

- Funeral Masses may be held with immediate family members, also in keeping with the guidance on public gatherings. This applies to Vigil Services and Graveside Services, as well.
- It is recommended that pastors notify family members who have already scheduled funeral Masses. If you have other questions regarding funerals, please contact Monsignor Robert Morris, Vicar General, at (727) 439-8639, or by e-mail: rfm@dosp.org.

CONFIRMATIONS

- All Confirmations are postponed until further notice. Your Parish will be given guidance on how they will be rescheduled.

RCIA SCRUTINIES

Due to the suspension of the Mass and the limitations placed upon gathering, the RCIA Scrutinies with the Elect for the Fourth Sunday of Lent (March 22nd) and the Fifth Sunday of Lent (March 29th) have been suspended by the Bishop.

HOLY WEEK

- An announcement regarding the Chrism Mass and other public celebrations for Holy Week will be issued on or before Friday, March 27, 2020.

If you have additional questions concerning these directives and accommodations, please contact Deacon Rick Wells, Chancellor, at (727) 341-6832, or rwells@dosp.org.