

The Catholic Communicator

"AN OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE"

Sunday, March 22, 2020

Excerpted Circular Letter to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe • March 13, 2020

From Very Reverend Glennon Jones, Vicar General

Concerning Restrictions Due to the Coronavirus Situation (Please see full letter at www.archdiosf.org)

To the People of God:

Looking toward the welfare of all, Catholic parishes are asked to immediately suspend public celebration of Masses and other services at this time due to the dangers inherent with the current situation. Catholics are dispensed from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass until this suspension is lifted.

The Archdiocese of Santa Fe therefore asks that its parishes and other entities:

- Suspend public celebrations of Mass. Churches may remain open for individual prayer.
- Individual confessions and consultations need not be suspended.
- Suspend/postpone all other non-essential meetings and group devotions such as communal penitential services, stations of the cross, CCD, youth and adult education, etc.
- Postpone or cancel if possible other rites such as baptisms, quinceañeras, weddings, funerals, etc. If held due to extraordinary circumstances, limit attendance to 20-30 persons and perform the rite without Mass.
- Eucharistic adoration may continue, but limit the number at any one time according to the size of the space utilized.

The decisions leading to these instructions are not made lightly, as we are keenly aware that they will be upsetting to many of the faithful. However, mindful of the responsibility for the care of all souls, this very temporary suspension of public Mass is weighed against the tragic possibility of facilitating an epidemic with its resultant sickness and the possibility of hundreds, if not thousands, of deaths. Therefore, the weight must fall on the obligation of charity for our neighbors' welfare. We recall how Jesus Himself emphasized necessity over strict enforcement of law: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath..." (from Mark 2:23-28)

Illnesses in congregations can spread rapidly. One might be sacrificially dismissive with one's own life and health, but we have the duty to safeguard the lives

and health of others. Science demonstrates the exponential spread of uncontained transmission, so the actions taken today are hoped to contribute to the prevention of that possibility.

Commonly-touched items can become catalysts for untold spread of contagion. Also, we cannot but be aware that, because only ordained

We are in a trying time and situation, but our hope is that this action will assist in minimizing its duration."

priests are able to consecrate the Eucharist, their own illnesses/deaths may result in a lengthy dearth of sufficient priests available to serve the faithful.

All are urged to read at least the Mass readings of the day and to meditate on them with their families and friends, praying for a quick end to our current situation and for the welfare of all. Other possible family and personal devotions include:

- Praying the rosary, stations of the cross and other prayers.
 - Reviewing daily Mass readings (may be found on the USCCB website uscbb.org).
 - Additional scriptural, theological or catechetical reading.
 - Televised or streamed Mass which can be viewed at archdiosf.org/covid-19 or listened to on Catholic Radio 98.9FM, both airing at noon.
- A list of resources is included on our website at archdiosf.org/covid-19
Wherever you are and whatever you do, please be assiduous in following good hygiene.