



**UPDATED DIRECTIVES
IN RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC
OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020**

**ALL PUBLIC MASSES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE
AS OF NOON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2020**

The work of the Church continues in all of its many dimensions during the Coronavirus pandemic and perhaps with even greater force and zeal. This latest provision by Archbishop Nelson J. Perez, the Archbishop of Philadelphia, responds to many needs of the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese in response to the growing concern over the spread of the virus and the directives of government and health officials. Even though public Masses are suspended in all churches in the Archdiocese as of Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at noon, the right and need of the faithful to hear the Word of God and celebrate the Sacraments is not put aside. Pastors, along with all those who work with them, are to be as attentive as possible to all the spiritual, pastoral and charitable needs of the people they serve.

PUBLIC MASSES

As of noon on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, all public Masses in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are suspended until further notice. This includes Sunday and Weekday Masses with the faithful.

- Priests are to continue to offer Holy Mass on Sunday and weekdays privately.
- The public Mass schedule is to be adjusted locally to accommodate this new situation.
- Justice and charity require that the Mass intentions already in place during this period be honored. If possible, priests are to offer Mass for these intentions during this period. If this is not possible, then the intention is to be transferred to a future date. The *Pro Populo* intention is to be observed during this period.
- Communion Services are not to be used as a replacement for the celebration of Mass.

- The Archbishop gives permission during Lent for priests to offer fitting Masses from those in the *Roman Missal* for Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions.

CHURCHES ARE TO REMAIN OPEN

All churches are to follow their ordinary schedule for opening and closing during this period so that the faithful have opportunities to pray.

- Public exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament may continue with adorers, with due regard for the limitation of participants.

OTHER SACRAMENTS AND FUNERALS

Baptisms, Penance, and Marriages are to take place as usual but with due regard for the limitation of participants and reasonable social distancing.

- The Archbishop dispenses the elect from the second and third scrutiny.
- Confessions are to take place in church and not in rectories or offices.
- Validations in preparation for the Easter Sacraments can take place without Mass.

Likewise, Funerals are to take place with due regard for the limitation of participants and reasonable social distancing.

VISITS TO THE SICK AND THE LAST SACRAMENTS

In conjunction with directives already in force in hospitals and institutions, all visits to the sick with Holy Communion, including in private homes, by priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are suspended. Priests are expected to celebrate the Sacraments for those in danger of death, and especially Holy Viaticum.

FIRST PENANCE AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

These celebrations are to be rescheduled.

PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK AND THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

Updates for these days and celebrations will be forthcoming.

RESOURCES

Information about live-stream opportunities for Mass, resources for prayer, devotions and spiritual guidance during this period will be available as soon as possible for wide dissemination on the Archdiocesan website. Pastors are encouraged to use social media as much as possible to minister to the needs of the faithful. These resources will also help the faithful remain connected to the Holy Eucharist.

Thank you so very much for your generous assistance during these most unusual times in the life of our local church. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at fr.dgill@archphila.org.

In Christ, Father Dennis Gill, Director, Office for Divine Worship