



March 13, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we continue to receive reports about the spread of the Coronavirus in our communities, I write to you today with some news that may be difficult to hear. After consultation with health care professionals and government officials, I am temporarily suspending all public Masses in the Archdiocese of Detroit until Monday, April 6.

The celebration of Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Catholic faith, through which we encounter and enter into sacred Communion with the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. The decision to temporarily suspend this practice was not and must never be taken lightly. As Mass is a commemoration of Christ's great act of love for us, we take this unprecedented measure with eyes fixed on him and his greatest commandment to love one another, which in this difficult time means that we ensure the health and safety of our community by following the wise counsel of local, state, and federal government and health officials.

During this growing spread of COVID-19, we must redouble these efforts, particularly of prayer and fasting. We should pray and fast for God's mercy on our local community and the whole world to end the Coronavirus pandemic. We should pray for medical professionals, researchers, and government leaders that the Lord would give them wisdom in their work and that we would heed their advice and directions for the good of society, especially for the least among us, those who are most susceptible of contracting this virus and other illnesses. You can find prayer resources [here](#). More resources will be forthcoming.

The decision to temporarily suspend public Masses has been communicated to your pastors in a separate correspondence with more details. Effective Saturday, March 14, all Sunday and weekday public Masses, faith formation courses, communal Penance services, and all other parish events will be suspended in the Archdiocese of Detroit until Monday of Holy Week, April 6. Mass will be available to you each day via live-stream and other media channels. You can find these on our website www.aod.org. Be assured that our priests will be offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass each day in private so as to harness and direct the great spiritual grace and power contained therein.

As you temporarily participate at Mass in this different way, you and your families are

encouraged to make a daily [Spiritual Communion](#) by praying:

*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 in 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.

At the discretion of pastors, churches may be open for private prayer so that you can approach Our Lord who is fully present in the Tabernacle. Whenever the church remains open, it is the responsibility of the pastor (or the one whom he designates) to ensure that no more than 100 people are present at one time. This directive is given by local government so that the number of cases of those infected with COVID-19 does not spike. Therefore, so as to refrain from large gatherings, there will be no posted times for collective prayers, recitation of the Rosary, or other set times for gathering.

Funerals, weddings, and baptisms are at the discretion of the pastor but are not to exceed 100 people in attendance. Holy Communion, except as Viaticum, will not be distributed to the faithful at any liturgy during this time.

Individual confessions, anointings, and other forms of pastoral care can be offered in a case-by-case basis. Consult your local parish for any of these needs during this time.

As I mentioned in [my letter yesterday](#), let us entrust ourselves to Our Lady of Lourdes, patron for those who suffer illness. Through her intercession, may God grant healing and protection to the people of southeast Michigan and beyond. And let us, by the courageous hope with which we face the challenge of the virus' spread, give witness to our confidence in the good news of the Lord's victory over suffering and death.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit

UNLEASH THE GOSPEL

12 State Street, Detroit, Michigan 48226-1823 | 313-237-5800 | aod.org