

**Urgent Memo**

**To:** All Priests and Deacons  
**From:** The Office of the Vicar General  
**Date:** March 16, 2020  
**Re:** Health Directives

Brothers, please carefully review the material below. You may already be aware of the general press statement that was released today, which includes all necessary information for the faithful. We are carefully monitoring CDC and local government directives for compliance and adjusting accordingly.

Provided here are further details to assist you in your own pastoral planning and communication efforts for your people. As of March 15, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control announced that it is recommended that all events involving 50 people or more be suspended or postponed. In an effort to promote the health and safety of everyone (clergy included), the Diocese of Rockville Centre announces the following measures:

1. Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 at 3:00 PM, all Masses (weekday and weekend), liturgies, devotions, meetings, and non-essential activities in our parishes are suspended or postponed through Tuesday, April 14, 2020. This will include all Holy Week and Easter Liturgies. However, these will be televised and available online (see below). Please do not attempt to host any alternative or outdoor liturgies. The Chrism Mass will be held privately and televised / streamed online. Priests are encouraged to pray in union with our Diocesan Bishop, our other bishops and all priests throughout the Diocese at that time, especially in the renewal of our priestly promises. Future announcements will be made regarding the distribution of Holy Oils. ***Oremus pro invicem!***
2. These restrictions also include all **Confirmations, First Communions, First Confessions**, etc. We will do our best to work with parishes in the coming weeks and months regarding the rescheduling of Confirmations. However, with the obvious limits to the Episcopal Calendars, Bishops may not be available for every Confirmation. When these events are rescheduled, we ask that they be announced by the local parishes.

**Funerals and weddings** may be permitted if necessary, but must be limited to immediate family and remain under 50 people in attendance. **Baptisms** should be postponed unless absolutely necessary and should observe the same limits.

3. Our Diocesan IT / Communications Department is preparing resources for you to use at your discretion to assist you **if you wish to offer live streaming** of Masses / liturgies / devotions / Missions / etc. from your own parish online. The faithful appreciate the ability to view liturgies (especially live) occurring at their own parish churches. So, please consider this option / resource. **However, these events cannot be open to the public.** If you choose to offer such services, the Churches must be closed and a minimal number people present to assist you.
4. Please remember that you are required to fulfill all Mass intention obligations, even if fulfilled by offering private Masses. You may wish to consider offering Masses live streamed at the normal

times scheduled for your parish in order that your people may easily follow the schedule, including the Holy Week schedule. In addition, please consider recording or live streaming such devotions as the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Parish Missions, etc. This is a time to be creative. If you are unable to offer any of these services online, please indicate that on your web and social media sites and direct people to the Catholic Faith Network (info included below).

5. Churches may remain open for private prayer at the discretion of the Pastor. This may include silent Eucharistic Adoration. However, you must observe the recommendation of fewer than 50 people permitted at a time.
6. You may continue to administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick as needed. Please exercise prudence and common sense, however. If a person is designated as "quarantined or at risk", even at home, please do not put your health or the health of others at risk by visiting. Hospitals are not permitting chaplains to enter in these circumstances. Offer pastoral care over the phone whenever possible. If needed, latex gloves can be worn for anointing (only one person per set of gloves) and, if used outside of hospital settings, buried after use. Follow hospital protocols for disposal of gloves in hospital settings. If called to a hospital, please follow the directions offered by the hospital staff. Avoid contaminating your oil stock by immersing your (gloved) thumb into it before entering a hospital room, while leaving the stock outside of the room. Retrieve the stock after removing your gloves.
7. Reconciliation Monday is also cancelled. Confessions may be heard as needed, but again, please exercise prudence and common sense. Maintain a safe distance (6 feet is recommended), and do not host gatherings of people for penance services.
8. The Catholic Faith Network (CFN) will provide televised and online daily Masses, including Holy Week and Easter Liturgies, as well as other devotional and spiritual programs. (Optimum channel 29/137, Verizon FiOS TV channel 296, and Spectrum channel 162/471.) CFN is also available on selected cable and satellite systems and through **24/7 live stream** at CFNtv.org. You can also watch CFN on Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Android, or by downloading the CFN iOS mobile app at the app store by searching "Catholic Faith Network" or "CFN".
9. Currently, our **Catholic Schools** are closed through March 20, 2020, following the measures taken by Nassau and Suffolk public schools. However, we continue to monitor the situation and will adapt and update as needed. Our parish **Religious Education** programs will remain suspended until Tuesday, April 14, 2020. Again, we continue to monitor the situation and will adapt and update as needed.
10. Effective on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, the administrative offices of the Diocese of Rockville Centre located in Rockville Centre and Massapequa Park will be closed until Tuesday, April 14, 2020. These locations will be thoroughly cleaned during closure. All employees will be working remotely, with business being conducted by email, telephonically or electronically, as best as possible. For the latest information visit [www.drvc.org](http://www.drvc.org). During this time, when communicating with diocesan offices, please use emails instead of phone calls.
11. Whenever possible, it is recommended that thorough regular cleaning practices be employed for all parish facilities (including churches, offices and school buildings).
12. The Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Elect Luis Miguel Romero, previously scheduled for April 16, 2020, is postponed indefinitely.

Brothers, these are uniquely challenging times that call for a calm and prudent example from us. Let us unite ourselves, with our Bishop and with each other, to the Lord and our Most Blessed Mother (of Good Counsel and Perpetual Help). We will continue to monitor ongoing developments and communicate with you in as timely and efficient ways as possible. Please know how deeply appreciated you are for your dedication and steadfastness in your care of souls.

Reverend Eric R. Fasano, J.C.L.  
Vicar General

“O Christ Jesus  
When all is darkness  
And we feel our weakness and helplessness,  
Give us the sense of Your Presence,  
Your Love and Your Strength.  
Help us to have perfect trust  
In Your protecting love  
and strengthening power,  
So that nothing may frighten or worry us,  
For, living close to You,  
We shall see Your Hand,  
Your Purpose, Your Will through all things.”

*- St. Ignatius of Loyola*