



Guidelines Following Shelter in Place Order

March 24-April 3, 2020

The Shelter in Place Order announced for Dallas County and taking effect Monday evening, March 23, are making it clear that restrictions put in place to mitigate effects of the coronavirus may well continue beyond Easter. With this in mind additional guidelines concerning Holy Week and Easter will be sent next Monday.

The “Shelter in Place” order for Dallas County affects only Dallas County. However, for the purposes of uniformity, these guidelines apply across the entire diocese.

In General

- There are to be **no scheduled gatherings** for any reason at the church or on church grounds during this time period, although the church may remain open at times during the daytime hours if this is practicable given the Shelter in Place Order.
- **Adoration** of the Blessed Sacrament is to be temporarily discontinued and parishioners given resources on the parish website for private prayer and spiritual communion.
- **Scheduled Confessions** at the church are to be temporarily discontinued. Individual requests in person can be responded to at your discretion, understanding that the Shelter in Place Order does not envision individuals traveling to churches, or priests visiting homes outside of an emergency situation.
- **Perfect Contrition**: Please be available by telephone or by email to explain to parishioners the nature of Perfect Contrition, which, as articulated by the Catechism (paragraph 1452) and most recently by the Holy Father, “arises from a love by which God is loved above all else” and “obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.” Remain especially encouraging to the Faithful, who may feel despair without access to the Sacrament of Confession. (see fuller reflection on this [Link](#))
- **Confession and Communion as Viaticum** are to be celebrated in danger of death. In the event where COVID-19 is indicated, only hear the person’s confession while remaining at least 6 feet away (closer contact requires special Personal Protective Equipment to avoid a 2-week quarantine). The **Apostolic Pardon** should also be given.
- Special attention should be given to the Holy Father’s communications on reconciliation and indulgences. See these on the Vatican website; or links are provided below.
- All **Confirmations** scheduled through the end of April will be postponed to a later date.
- **Baptisms** should be postponed except in emergency situations. In situations of genuine need where a parent expresses concern for the health and life of their child, send them the ritual attached here ([Link](#)).
- **Weddings**, including Convalidations, should be rescheduled. If this is not possible they should be celebrated privately without mass and with no more than 10 people in attendance, including the priest or deacon. Quinceañeras should also be postponed.
- **All other parish gatherings** should remain cancelled at this time.

Funerals/Wakes/Viewings/Committals Diocese of Dallas

Funerals

- Funeral services will be limited to a graveside service with immediate family only and should not exceed 10 people in total, including the minister and the funeral director staff.
- Memorial Masses will have to be celebrated at a later date once the crisis passes.
- It is strongly recommended that no one from a vulnerable population attend.
- Social distancing (six feet) should be observed with attendees at all times.
- No physical contact at any point should occur while offering comfort, etc.

Wakes and Viewings: These will not be possible at this time.

Memorial Cards, Copies of the obituary: These will be especially important to send to family members and friends who are unable to attend because of these restrictions.

No pre- or post-service social gathering is allowed in parish buildings or on parish property

Please share this information with pastoral sensitivity with funeral directors, bereavement ministry leaders, parish staff and parishioners.

Every effort should be made to stress that these measures are designed out of love and care for all those in attendance, parish and funeral home staff, and those that are most vulnerable at this time. These stipulations are in line with the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state and local Departments of Public Health.

Please emphasize that a Memorial Mass and if possible, a reception will be scheduled at a later time.

All of these guidelines are enacted out of charity, and concern that members of the Catholic community are kept safe, and do not become carriers of the coronavirus to others in our community. Our hope also is that as there are fewer members of our Catholic community infected by the virus, there will be more lifesaving equipment and hospital beds available for all who have need of these resources. Each measure taken by itself and all of them together constitute a great sacrifice for all of us. However, the Lord never abandons us nor does he leave us without the means of expressing our faith in him and fulfilling his commandment: to love him above all else and love our neighbor as ourselves. Christ the Good Shepherd is alone the source of our hope and is present among us, leading us through this dark valley.

Bishop Greg Kelly, VG

Links to Vatican Documents on Reconciliation and Indulgences

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/03/20/200320d.html>
<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/03/20/200320c.html>