



## Guidelines Following Shelter-in-Place Order

March 24-April 3, 2020

The “Shelter in Place” order, which went into effect at 11:59 on March 23 and continues until 11:59 on April 3, has necessitated a number of changes for many people. Bishop Burns takes the advice of civil authorities seriously and wants to be an active participant in working to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. For that reason, the following guidelines will be in effect until April 4, 2020:

### HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

At this time, because civil instruction and advice is regularly changing, additional guidelines concerning Holy Week and Easter will be published soon.

### IN GENERAL

- **Masses** and other devotions will continue to be livestreamed where possible. In addition to parishes, the Diocese continues to publish live masses and recorded events on the Diocese of Dallas website and local television.
- There are to be **no scheduled gatherings** at the church or on church grounds during this time period, although the church building may remain physically 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 suspended. Pastors should provide resources on the parish website or elsewhere for private prayer and spiritual communion. The Diocese of Dallas website also contains a number of resources.
- **Scheduled Confessions** at the church are to be temporarily suspended. Individual requests in person can be responded to by the priest, understanding that the Shelter-in-Place Order does not envision individuals traveling to churches, or priests visiting homes outside of emergency situations
- **Perfect Contrition:** Pastors and priests will 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 especially in cases where sacramental confession is not immediately available “obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.” The Diocese has also published a resource on Perfect Contrition that should be helpful to the faithful who are unable to seek the Sacrament of Confession. It is located [here](#).

- **Confession and Communion as Viaticum** are to be given in danger of death. In the event where COVID-19 is indicated, appropriate measures will be taken.
- All **Confirmations** scheduled through the end of April will be postponed to a later date.
- **Baptisms** are to be postponed, except in emergency situations.
- **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

- 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 be celebrated at a later date once the crisis passes.
- It is strongly recommended that no one from a vulnerable population attend a funeral service.
- Social distancing (six feet) should be observed with attendees at all times.
- **Wakes and Viewings** will not be possible at this time.
- No pre- or post-service social gathering is allowed in parish buildings or on parish property

Please know that 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.