



**Message from Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
March 17, 2020**

Peace be with you Brothers and Sisters!

Here in Texas, as elsewhere, the current health emergency has induced fear and anxiety in many hearts and minds. At the same time, it has brought unity to us as a people who seek the good for others. Our faith has to be lived with reason, prudence and good judgment.

I have consulted with Bishop George Sheltz and the Presbyteral Council and have decided to make the following modifications to my March 13, 2020 message. These modifications are to be followed until further notice.

MASS

- The public celebration of all weekday and Sunday Masses will be suspended in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020. Churches are to remain open for individual and private prayer observing their normal hours, as discerned by the Pastors.
- Parishes, to the extent they are able, are to inform parishioners of the opportunity to view Masses either through network television or other live stream options over the internet
- Sunday is still the Lord's Day. Families should gather to pray, read scripture, recite the Rosary and reflect together on their faith.

RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is to be made available to our people where possible, with special consideration given to the age and circumstances of the Priests in our Parishes.
- I recommend that you consider offering confessions in spaces other than small confessionals. Please observe good spacing between the penitent and Priest. Those waiting for the priest are asked to observe "social distancing."
- Penance Services are all cancelled.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

- Priests are to attend to the needs of the sick, particularly, when they are asking for the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. When celebrating this Sacrament in a hospital setting, please adhere to the current guidelines set forth by the medical facility.
- The distribution of Communion for the Sick and viaticum for the dying are reserved to Priests only at this time.

BAPTISM OF INFANTS

- The celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism is to be postponed, unless there is danger of death.

WEDDINGS

- Weddings are limited to celebration of the Marriage Rite outside of Mass itself, with no more than 10 person in attendance, including ministers.
- It is recommended that pastors notify couples who are currently preparing for marriage or have already scheduled weddings.

FUNERALS

- Funerals may take place only in the form of “The Rite of Committal with Final Commendation” (also known as the “graveside”). A memorial Mass can be scheduled appropriately at a later date.

HOLY WEEK

- Particular directives will be given for Holy Week in the event the crisis continues through that time period.

HOLY WATER FONTS

- Please drain and clean all Holy Water fonts and do not refill at this time.

This is a dynamic situation and the above directives may be modified as circumstances change.

I want to assure all the people of the Archdiocese of my daily prayers and concern for your wellbeing, particularly our Priests. We are facing a difficult and uncertain future and we may think the Lord is asleep. Through our constant prayer and works of charity, our Lord suddenly arises and calms the rough seas.

Sincerely in Christ,

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston