
MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL PRIESTS AND PARISHES
OF THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

FROM: BISHOP MICHAEL C. BARBER, SJ *+MBX*

SUBJECT: LITURGY DURING CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK **UPDATE #3**

DATE: MARCH 13, 2020



Because of the heightened concern for the well-being of all our people in light of the Coronavirus, especially the elderly, **I am dispensing from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass for all Catholics in the Diocese of Oakland.** Effective immediately, this dispensation will remain in effect until further notice. We will continue to monitor the recommendations of public health officials and re-evaluate as the situation warrants.

In the meantime, our churches and chapels remain open. Masses will continue to be celebrated and confessions heard, in order to provide for the spiritual consolation of the faithful. We leave the decision to attend Mass or not to each individual's discretion.

Some parishes may determine to cancel or postpone nonessential gatherings, including catechetical sessions, fundraisers and social activities. This decision should be made at the parish level. If the cancelled or postponed event was intended to raise money for a ministry or service, please consider offering people an alternative means to contribute to the ministry or service.

As we have previously stated, if people feel unwell or suffer from an existing medical condition, they should stay home. This dispensation is in place to help mitigate the spread of the virus, while still giving people access to the source of love and peace, Jesus Christ.

If you choose to attend Mass, please practice the guidelines being given by public health officials as posted on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/0), especially washing your hands often and maintaining at least an arm's length distance from others.

Those who are not able to physically participate at Sunday Mass in their parish church should unite themselves spiritually with the Lord. Daily Scripture readings are available at usccb.org. Live-streamed Masses are available at/on the Internet and television, including at EWTN.com.

I thank our priests who stand ready to be Good Shepherds, reassuring our people, dispensing the consolation of the sacraments, and bringing the healing touch of Christ to those who are ill. The Catholic Church has never lacked saints who have generously volunteered to assist the sick and suffering, even at personal risk. St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Father Damian of Molokai, St. John of God, St. Sister Marianne Cope, are all examples to us of heroic love and service. Let us follow their lead.

Our Lady, Health of the Sick, intercede for us with your Son - and bring an end to this plague afflicting our world.

In this time of need, I invite all the faithful to seek together the maternal intercession of our Blessed Mother.

Pope Francis' Prayer for Healing

**O Mary,
you shine always on our way
as sign of our safety and hope.**

**We entrust ourselves to you,
Health of the Sick,
who at the foot of the Cross bound yourself to the suffering of Jesus,
keeping strong in your faith.**

**O Salvation of God's people,
you know what we need
and we are sure you will provide it for us
just as at Cana of Galilee
the joy and feasting could return
after that moment of trial.**

**Mother of Divine Love, help us,
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father
and to do what Jesus tells us,
He who took upon Himself our sufferings
and is marked by our sorrows
and so lead us, toward the Cross,
to the joy of the Resurrection.
Amen.**