



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Priests and Deacons

FROM: + *Richard E Pates*  
Most Reverend Richard E. Pates

DATE: March 30, 2020

RE: Ongoing Coronavirus Practices

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Heartfelt thanks to all of you for your generous, kind and patient ministering to the faithful entrusted to us. The restrictions imposed upon us by the “stay at home” measures in the State of Illinois certainly strain our patience. But out of love for one another and providing the quickest way to contain and overcome the virus, it is important to stay the course and abide by the imposed directives.

Nearly all reputable medical scientists and experts confirm this approach and where it has been first followed in the North West, there are signs of its efficiency.

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I encourage you to undertake whatever technological opportunity is available in your parishes to communicate Masses, guided prayer services, reflection sessions and broadcast from Eucharistic Adoration Chapels, etc. A parish in the diocese has been live streaming Masses throughout the “stay in place” directive. The number of viewers has been growing. This past weekend it is estimated that 10,000 joined at one or other of the Masses celebrated.

The Diocese of Joliet provides live streaming Masses from the Cathedral of St. Raymond at 9:00am and 11:30am daily. Following the 9:00am Mass, there is an hour of Eucharistic Adoration. The marvel of live streaming is that it can be “called up” at any time and be available for viewing and prayer.

The Cathedral of St. Raymond will also be live streaming the services of Holy Week as follows:

Passion (Palm) Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am  
Holy Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm  
Good Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm  
Holy Saturday – Easter Vigil, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:00pm  
Easter Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am

A brother priest raised the question as to whether each parish needs to celebrate an Easter Vigil. The response is no. Those parishes are asked to inform their parishioners of the time and contact information of the parishes that are live streaming the Vigil, such as the Cathedral.

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The diocesan website, through the good services of the Chancellor's Office, has posted very helpful information in English and Spanish including many reflections and materials to aid prayer. Prominent among these resources is the "Urbi et Orbi" message of Pope Francis delivered last week in Rome.

In his statement, (also on diocesan website) regarding the Holy Father's message, Archbishop José Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops notes:

"In his message, the Holy Father reminds us that this time of coronavirus is a call to courage, a call to faith. And as he says, faith doesn't mean simply agreeing with a set of ideas. Faith means making a decision to entrust our lives to Jesus Christ and to follow his path is to embrace his cross.

"The Holy Father tells us today that this pandemic is a time for conversion, a time for us to make choices about what truly matters in our lives, a time for us to change the priorities of our societies. It is a time to turn to God and to recognize that no matter how advanced our civilization and technology, we cannot save ourselves. We need God.

"In this moment saints are being made, the Holy Father tells us, pointing to the quiet heroism of ordinary people carrying out their daily duties in extraordinary times, serving one another with kindness and patience. 'How many people pray, offer and intercede for the good of all,' our Holy Father observes. 'Prayer and silent service: these are our winning weapons.'"

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Questions have surfaced with regard to the sacraments in our diocese. It is at times such as this that adherence to classical Church teaching should be our guide. The Baptism of infants should be administered according to normal Church practice and done on an emergency basis only in the face of serious illness. Venial sins are forgiven through an act of contrition and sincere penitence. Serious mortal sin is forgiven through a heartfelt act of contrition and the determination to confess such sacramentally with a priest at the earliest opportunity.

The closure of our Church facilities remains in effect until the directives are lifted by the State of Illinois.

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Once again, I encourage you, your pastoral team and other dedicated parishioners to be in contact with the elderly, the lonely, the fearful within your parish. Your consolation, support, and encouragement will do wonders!

I commend our diocesan community. Overwhelmingly, we have engaged the current “stay at home” directives with positive cooperation and a motivating spirit of charity, “an undertaking well begun is half done.”

My support and heartfelt prayer are with all our community. I rejoice that God has blessed us with great faith.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of help.