

St. Oliver's Update on the Covid-19 Virus: From our Pastor:

Masses Will continue as usual for this weekend and for weekdays. We are also canceling the penance service and the parish mission because I'm afraid the attendance of the mission will be down. I believe most parishes are doing the same. We will have the usual time for confessions Saturday mornings and afternoons and we will add Monday of Holy Week after the mass as well as Wednesday of Holy Week after Mass.

All Eucharistic Ministers are advised to refrain from visiting the sick and home bound. We have canceled religious education programs for until further notice including Life Teen and Roots.

The Fish Fry for the remainder of Lent have been cancelled.

The Seder Supper is cancelled.

Adult Faith Formation programs are canceled until the end of the month.

RCIA will continue as usual.

From the Archdiocese:

From the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Friday, March 13, 2020

Dear Friends,

During Lent we are called to live the gospel of Jesus Christ more fully. The COVID-19 outbreak has challenged us to discern ways to increase our outreach to one another, while at the same time exercising greater prudence in the ways in which we render Christ-like care. We all need to be present to those on the margins who may be fearful and vulnerable right now. The mission of the Church continues, even if it looks a little different than before.

Recognizing the grave cause of the current public health emergency, I dispense all the Catholic faithful of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and all Catholics currently in the Archdiocese of Atlanta from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass for the weekends of March 14-15; 21-22; and 28-29. This decision was made with input from the priests who comprise the archdiocesan College of Consultors and senior staff.

We also wish to update some other pastoral guidelines. Some of these have already been instituted. Others are being added AS OF SATURDAY, MARCH 14. For continuing updates on how the Archdiocese of Atlanta is responding to COVID-19, visit our website, <https://archatl.com/>.

Holy Mass: Even without the present dispensation, people who are ill should not attend Mass, but they can still participate from home by watching a televised or broadcast Mass. The faithful can also make an act of spiritual communion. At the bottom of the memo, there is a list of parishes that offer video Masses as well as resources for spiritual acts of communion. More can be found on the COVID-19 section of <https://archatl.com/>.

Adoration, private prayer and Reconciliation: Penance services should be canceled, but individual confessions may continue as usual. In place of the penance service, of the penance service, you may wish to increase access to individual confessions.

Opportunities for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and private prayer should continue to be available. Please ask those in high risk groups to carefully consider whether they should attend. Please ask people to practice “social distancing” techniques such as remaining a few feet away from others and not shaking hands or embracing. We recommend deep-cleaning all gathering spaces every time they are used. The CDC has practical cleaning guidelines here .

Visits to the Homebound: In-person visits to the homebound and elderly should be discontinued for the time being. This includes visits to healthcare, nursing, and assisted living facilities. Encourage your ministers to call their neighbors by phone or video conference, but not to put them at risk of exposure by visiting. The ministry of presence is an important one, so it may be time to get creative about how we visit with those who are in need of company. The CDC has recommended using a “buddy system” in which specific ministers are assigned to check on specific people by phone or video conference to make sure no one is excluded from care. Pastors should consider pastoral needs and use prudential judgement in approaching cases of extreme need or grave illness.

Catholic Schools: Archdiocesan schools will be closed from March 16 through March 27. Schools are scheduled to reopen on Monday, March 30, subject to review due to this rapidly changing situation. Contact your local school for information on virtual or at-home learning.

PSR/CCD, Youth Ministry, Faith Formation, and other gatherings: Every attempt should be made to curtail or postpone non-essential gatherings. It would be wise to remind people in the high risk group that they should carefully consider attending any large group or public events at this time.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta will provide a COVID-19 link on the homepage of the website to post updates on advisories from the Office of the Administrator. Updates will be posted regularly as the situation continues to evolve. We recommend you monitor national and local health agencies for more timely updates on the spread of this virus and follow the recommendations of health agencies as we move forward.

Please join me in prayer for our world. We ask through the intercession of the Blessed Mother for a swift end to the spread of this illness, comfort for all those affected, and wisdom for all those who must respond to this in any way.

In Jesus and Mary,

Most Reverend Joel M. Konzen, S.M.

Diocesan Administrator

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