

In addition to his announcement that no public Masses would be celebrated effective March 18, Bishop Persico instituted several norms to guide priests during this time. Among them:

1. All priests are to continue to celebrate Mass daily, for the spiritual benefit of those entrusted to their care. If they are not assisted by a deacon, they should celebrate, even if alone.
 - *Pastors in particular are reminded of their sacred responsibility to personally celebrate Mass for their parishioners (pro populo) every Sunday. Other than these, Masses can continue to be celebrated for the intentions already in place.*
 - *For the celebration of the Easter Triduum, where the priest will not be assisted by a deacon, he should find another priest with whom to concelebrate the Triduum liturgies – each for the benefit of his own parishioners – so that no priest need celebrate alone. Episcopal vicars and deans should stand ready to help coordinate this for any priest who asks for their assistance.*
2. All parish and secondary churches in which the Eucharist is reserved are to remain open daily for the faithful to visit the Blessed Sacrament.
 - *Periods of Eucharistic exposition and adoration are encouraged.*
 - *These should be extended over several hours at a time, in order to allow the faithful to stagger their visits so that the church never becomes crowded and people may come and go without unnecessary contact.*
 - *Instruct parishioners to maintain social distance between themselves and others.*
 - *This is a time to catechize parishioners on how to make a spiritual communion. Resources to help you will be forthcoming from the diocese.*
3. Priests may continue to hear individual confessions in the church – none in the rectory – either by appointment or at scheduled times.
 - *Instruct parishioners during scheduled times to maintain social distance between themselves and others.*
4. Anointing of the sick should continue as usual, based upon need.
 - *Non-emergency visits such as First Friday calls should be suspended.*

The following are effective immediately through May 17, 2020:

5. All confirmations through May 17, 2020 will be rescheduled, once the situation stabilizes.
6. Funeral Masses may continue to be celebrated, but with only the immediate family members and funeral home workers present.
7. Baptisms may continue to be celebrated, but only with the sponsor(s) and immediate family members present. New water must be blessed for every individual baptism.
8. Marriages may continue to be celebrated, but only with the bride, groom, two witnesses, and immediate family members present.

Some other general notes:

- The bishops of Pennsylvania are in regular contact, in order to provide you with the best pastoral help and direction possible.
- Please encourage your parishioners to find some way to keep holy the sabbath. Resources will be available on the diocesan website. Sunday Masses will be live-streamed from the cathedral each week.
- Do your best to help parishioners understand the bigger picture. This is, in fact, a pro-life approach to this challenging moment. It is essential that we take steps to protect the most vulnerable among us.

These times call for us to look beyond ourselves to the benefit of those whom we serve. I have every confidence that we will get through this together, with God's grace. Cooperating with all that the advice given by the CDC and other groups, we nonetheless remember that prayer is our first resource in the fight against COVID-19. Be assured of my continued prayers and support for you.