



OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

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March 24, 2020

Dear Father:

May God bless you during this holy season of Lent! Please know of my continued gratitude for your great pastoral care in very difficult circumstances during this pandemic.

I very much appreciate the many priests who have communicated with me about both the positive steps they have taken and their honest reservations that certain practices, while benevolent, are not the best for maintaining social distance and scrupulous hygiene.

With this in mind, please carefully read below the pastoral directives and approaches. Feel free to call me if you have questions or observations.

By way of revision and refinement of the liturgical guidelines distributed last week, I ask that you observe the following regarding provision of the sacraments through the pandemic. These instructions replace and supersede previous communications on these topics. I am taking into account both information from church officials and healthcare authorities, as well as feedback from pastors.

Holy Week/Triduum

- Please plan on no public liturgies for Holy Week, Triduum, and Easter. The invitation to clergy and parish representatives for the Chrism Mass is also cancelled. I sent instructions last Friday for these liturgies without the assembly present.
- The Cathedral of the Assumption will be live-streaming Palm Sunday, the Chrism Mass, a Tenebrae Service on Wednesday, Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday (including Stations in the afternoon and the Good Friday liturgy of the Lord's Passion in the evening), the Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday Mass. We will have a detailed schedule of Cathedral liturgies on the web site. I am sure that other parishes will plan to live-stream these liturgies and will share on your web sites. If you wish to share information with us, it also can be added to the Holy Week/Triduum schedule we always prepare for www.archlou.org.

Confessions:

- Confession, either at scheduled times or by appointment, remains possible, provided there are proper safeguards for hygiene and social distancing.
- The USCCB advises a Perfect Act of Contrition for those who are unable to go to regular confession for any reason. A Perfect Act of Contrition requires a sincere desire for forgiveness and the firm intention to make a regular confession when it is safe to do so. Parishes are encouraged to communicate this information and even to provide materials for an examination of conscience and the Act of Contrition to say at home.

Holy Communion:

- Outside of emergency situations (viaticum), I ask that the individual distribution of Holy Communion (such as in a drive-through format) be discontinued, because it places an undue risk on the minister and the person receiving communion.
- Parishes are urged to communicate the practice of Spiritual Communion. A sample prayer is located at www.archlou.org/covid-19.

In case of emergency need of the sacraments, note the following rituals:

- Rite of Baptism to use in the danger of death (for adults *RCIA* #375-399; for children *Order of Baptism for Children* #157-164).
- Rites of Emergencies: Sacraments of Penance, Communion as Viaticum, and Anointing of the Sick (*Pastoral Care of the Sick* #264-274).

Other information:

- CDC guidelines of March 16th ask that gatherings of 10 or more be cancelled for the next 15 days (i.e. through the end of March). Any parish that allows for private prayer or adoration must adhere to this limit and enforce protocols for social distancing and cleanliness. I ask that any weddings or funerals occurring during this time be limited to immediate family only.
- I am encouraged by the creative use of live-streaming and social media to connect with the faithful. Parishes that are able to do so should continue to use technology as a primary way of ministering during this time. A collection of online resources can be found at www.archlou.org/covid-19. Please contact the Office of Worship or Archdiocesan Communications Office if you have something to contribute.
- The spirit of these directives should guide the distribution of any other items (such as blessed palms). Person-to-person contact and events that invite persons to leave their homes are discouraged.
- A plenary indulgence has been granted for those suffering from COVID-19 or quarantined because of it. More information on the plenary indulgence from the USCCB will post to www.archlou.org/covid-19 soon.

Thank you for your leadership and pastoral care. You are in my prayers.

Fraternally yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Kurtz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a stylized "K".

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.
Archbishop of Louisville

Cc: Deacons
Liturgical Ministers of the Archdiocese