



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PHOENIX

Statement from the Diocese of Phoenix

March 16, 2020

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Phoenix:

Two very significant issues have transpired in the last 24 hours:

1. All public schools have closed in Arizona and all Catholic Schools have closed in the Diocese of Phoenix.
2. The President has recommended limiting all public gatherings to 10 people, as well as other guidelines.

Effective immediately and until further notice, Bishop Olmsted is suspending all weekday and Sunday Masses, and asking for all parish- and diocesan-based public gatherings to be cancelled.

1. The Sunday Mass obligation is dispensed by Bishop Olmsted for all Catholics residing in or visiting the Diocese of Phoenix.
2. Churches and chapels may remain open for private prayer. Protocol for social distancing must be observed.
3. Communal Penance services should be cancelled; however, priests are strongly encouraged to make confessions available in outdoor or open-air spaces, if this is judged helpful.
4. No parish religious education programs are to assemble.
5. No parish public events or gatherings that exceed 10 persons.
6. Mass of the Holy Oils "Chrism Mass" will be celebrated privately, with oils to be distributed to the clergy at the Diocesan Pastoral Center for those in Maricopa County. The Sacred Oils will be overnighted to the parishes in the rest of the Diocese.
7. Weddings should be restricted to 10 or less persons.
8. Funerals should be restricted to immediate family and friends, less than 10 attending.

These directives are in force until further notice. Visit this website for updates:

<https://www.dphx.org/StayHealthy>

While these directives are a hardship and deeply painful for us all, they are sensible and in line with the guidance of the President and the spirit of the CDC's directive. Due to the highly fluid nature of this crisis situation, the Diocese continues to monitor this situation closely.

ENCOUNTERING THE LIVING CHRIST

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Additionally, parishes are asked to place a large sign on the front doors of the church notifying the faithful of the following:

- **Bishop Olmsted has dispensed all of the faithful from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice.**
- Catholics are encouraged to make a Spiritual Communion, to pray the Rosary and other devotional prayers during this time.
- You may also list the times and channels for TV Mass in English and Spanish as well as radio, YouTube, and Facebook if you wish.

Christian Charity will prevail – throughout history Christians have served the community as a witness of love and care during times of illness. Christ is the center of our life and He will lead us through all challenges.

It is important to be smart and think about what each of us can do to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. We live in a generation where information is at our fingertips; there are many sources of information that may not be accurate and may lead to increased fear. Our website will help keep you informed of important developments and equip you with critical information. Let us remember that we are united in Christ through prayer and a common spirit of love and trust in Him.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Diocese of Phoenix, pray for us.