**Diocese of Harrisburg**

**Coronavirus/COVID-19 Pastoral & Liturgical Concerns Update**

**March 30, 2020**

***Revisions are noted in red.***

1. **CHURCHES AND CHAPELS.** All churches and chapels, including perpetual adoration chapels are closed to the public and should be secure. The churches and chapels are closed not only to public worship but also private visitation. This time allows for a deep cleaning of the churches and enables us time to prudently keep social distance from one another.
2. **HOLY MASS.** Priests are to celebrate privately Holy Mass each day during this time, preferably using the intentions already scheduled for the parish. A Pastor’s Mass intention for Sunday must be the Mass for the People (*Missa pro populo*). Priests are not to celebrate Mass more than once a day privately. Extra intentions should be rescheduled or sent to the Missions or retired priests. You may celebrate Mass in the parish church or in an appropriate chapel in the rectory. The public should not be admitted to these celebrations. Although, one or two lay persons of good health may assist in those liturgies broadcast via the internet. For Holy Week Masses and during Eastertime, a musician and cantor may be admitted in order to assist for those who are streaming their Masses. Mass is not to be celebrated out-of-doors, on church porticoes or balconies, nor in parking lots. Priests are to take seriously the public health risk of gathering the faithful together, even in parked cars.
3. **FUNERALS.** Graveside committal celebrations may happen as soon as possible with families. A Mass for the Dead (Mass of Remembrance) may be scheduled for a later date. You may always offer Mass privately for the intention of the deceased provided you are not binating. For pastoral reasons, a small funeral Mass with fewer than ten persons may take place if the recommended precautions are taken. For counties under a “stay-at-home” order, funerals are not allowed.
4. **MATRIMONY.** The celebration of Matrimony within and outside of Mass may happen with the fewest number of participants as possible, provided it is within the government recommendations. It is understandable that couples may not be able to reschedule due to venue contracts. Although we cannot control the number of the group gathered for a reception, you are responsible for the number gathering at the church. Do not exceed the government guidelines. Please ensure that all canonical permissions and dispensations are in place.
5. **BAPTISM.** It is highly recommended that all infant Baptisms be deferred until a safer time, except in the case of emergency and danger of death. Baptisms may occur with the fewest number of participants as possible, provided it is within the government recommendations. For counties under a “stay-at-home” order, baptisms are not allowed.
6. **CONFIRMATION.** All confirmations scheduled on the Confirmation Calendar are postponed. Bishop Gainer, Fathers Danneker, Clark, and Forrey will not be undertaking any of their scheduled confirmations. The Bishop has given all priests in the Diocese of Harrisburg the faculty to confirm any person within the Diocese of Harrisburg from Ash Wednesday through and including Pentecost. Pastors are to assume the responsibility to confirm their students at a suitable time after the immediate danger has passed. Any pastor/priest confirming after Pentecost will need to ask permission for the faculty to confirm of Bishop Gainer prior to the confirmation through a written communication.
7. **RCIA.** All candidates and the Elect preparing for the Easter Sacraments are to be notified that the sacraments will be conferred upon them at a time when it is safe and convenient for them. The only exception to this is danger of death, at which time the person should receive all three sacraments in a simple ceremony following the *Pastoral Care for the Sick* or in the *Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults* (no. 375ff). The Elect can be initiated at any time, though preferably on a Sunday or solemnity, according to the ritual provided in the *Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The Introduction explains, “even though the rite of Christian initiation occurs at a different point in the liturgical year, the structure of the entire rite … remains the same (no. 26).” Consult the Introduction, nos. 26-30, for the minor adjustments. The scrutinies are dispensed. It is recommended to use the Solemnity of Pentecost as a potential substitute for Easter, if this remains a possibility. The Vigil for Pentecost provides a noble parallel that can substitute for the Easter Vigil. There is an extended Liturgy of the Word after which the rites can unfold.
8. **PENANCE.** With the churches closed and the penance services suspended, priests are to be careful to respond to the requests for confession from those who are dying. The faithful should be urged to request the sacrament only in danger of death. To protect the priest, those with whom he lives, as well as the parish staff, priests are not to hear confessions in the parish office or rectory at this time. A suitable neutral, well-ventilated, and sanitized space should be arranged should the necessity arise. For counties under a “stay-at-home” order, creative means of celebrating Penance outside and in other manners are not allowed.
9. **ANOINTING OF THE SICK.**  Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum, whenever possible, must be given when someone is in danger of death. Please be careful to change the cotton and oil in your stock between anointing. Stocks and pyx should be sanitized after each use. Also, you may not use gloves. However, you may use a cotton swab to apply the sacred oil. Home visits should be suspended except for the dying.
10. **HOSPITAL AND NURSING HOME VISITATION.** Hospital and nursing home visits are suspended until further notice except by the chaplains of these institutions or in emergency cases for the dying.

**Separate instructions for Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are forthcoming. The previous instructions are still in force that these will be celebrated without a congregation.**

*Fr. Joshua R Brommer*

*Pastor & Rector Cathedral Parish of Saint Patrick*

*Director of the Office for Divine Worship*