



Diocese of Owensboro

McRaith Catholic Center

Office of Communications
March 11, 2020

Statement Regarding Suspension of Mass

All of us at the Diocese of Owensboro are very concerned about the health and safety of our parishioners and the broader community in light of the outbreak of COVID19 in the Commonwealth. We have communicated with pastors and those who assist them about our liturgical practices, including options for the sign of peace, hygiene issues for those who serve at Mass, and the recommendation to suspend the distribution of Holy Communion from the chalice to the faithful. Many bishops are recommending that the faithful receive Holy Communion in the hand and not on the tongue.

Bishop William F. Medley has been in dialogue with other bishops in Kentucky and is seeking their recommendations for restrictions of upcoming gatherings in light of Governor Beshear's announcement this morning.

The Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is at the center of the life of the Church. Perhaps especially in difficult times, liturgical gatherings are a source of comfort and hope for the faithful, as well as an opportunity to offer our prayers to God for those who are suffering or who cannot be with us. At the same time, it is important, especially for those who are ill or ill at ease, to be able to exercise individual discretion in light of this situation.

With the information we have now, Bishop Medley will not be calling for a diocesan-wide cancellation of daily or weekend Masses. We will send additional messages to our pastors about communicating the risks of large gatherings and how to mitigate those risks. We will ask pastors to encourage those who are ill or have symptoms to stay home as an act of Christian charity for their fellow parishioners. We want individuals who feel vulnerable, especially senior citizens or those with underlying health conditions, to know that they are not obligated to attend Sunday Mass. Pastors will be asked to publicize EWTN's Mass times, which are available through a variety of platforms around the diocese.

It is important to note that this is a rapidly changing situation and we will continue to provide updates as necessary.

As a reminder:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
 - Stay home if you are sick (you should be fever-free for 24 hours before any public contact).
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw away the tissue and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean frequently touched areas/surfaces.

The Diocese of Owensboro continues to monitor this ever-changing situation and will share more information as it impacts our diocese as it becomes available. Thank you and please continue to pray for this situation and the health of all those impacted worldwide.

For any additional information regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

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