

## Statement Concerning Additional Measures to Stem Covid-19

March 18, 2020

Feast of St. Cyril of Jerusalem

To the Faithful and Clergy of the Diocese of Duluth,

To further contain the spread the contagion of Covid-19, it has become necessary to enact the following temporary measures in our Diocese, **beginning March 20, 2020 through April 20, 2020**. If necessary, this date may be extended. However, should the situation improve more quickly, these measures would be lifted at that time.

### All public Masses are suspended.

- The obligation to attend Sunday Mass is lifted until the crisis passes.
- Priests may say a private Mass without a congregation present, remembering their people at Mass.
- Mass can be followed on television, radio and online.
- Sundays are to be observed as the Lord's Day through devotional practices such as an hour of silent prayer, the Rosary and other devotions.
- Priests should see to it that churches remain open for an extended period of time each day so that those who wish may come and pray before the Lord in the tabernacle.
- The Sacrament of Penance should be offered at regular times.
- Priests are asked to place Stations of the Cross booklets in the Churches and other devotionals for the private use of the faithful.
- Priests are asked to keep their parish offices open according to a schedule so that priests and people can stay connected.

### Gatherings of more than ten (10) people are cancelled.

- If you feel ill, stay at home.
- If you are 60 or older, or have an underlying medical condition, stay home.
- Wash your hands frequently (recommended 20 seconds).
- When with others, practice social distancing (recommended 6 ft between people).
- If you experience symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath, call your physician and ask to be tested for the virus.

## Priests and the Faithful are asked to fulfill the requirements of the Corporal Works of Mercy during this time, as best they can.

- The sick are to be cared for with visits, Holy Communion, Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum.
- Funerals are to be private (only family and close friends).
- There are to be no funeral receptions.

## These measures will be adjusted as conditions permit. Concerning Holy Week liturgies:

- The Chrism Mass will take place as scheduled, but only myself, Bishop Powers, Fr. Hastings and the Consultors will be in attendance. Priests should obtain the Holy Oils from the Consultor (former Dean) for their deanery.
- Priests should celebrate the Liturgies of Holy Week privately without a congregation taking the legitimate options and making the necessary adjustments.
- Priests should take special care to keep their Churches open for an extended period of time on Good Friday.
- Baptisms, Receptions into the Church and Confirmations set for the Vigil, should be postponed to a later date.
- Should the measures continue, parish celebrations of First Communion and Confirmation should be postponed to a later date.

I do not take these temporary measures lightly and I strongly encourage you, the Faithful and the Clergy, to do the same. Let us pray that I will be able to lift them soon, that we will remain safe and well as we stand with Mary at the foot of the Cross during this time of crisis, and that we will be able quickly to resume the public sharing of the Gospel and our Catholic faith. Trusting in the Risen and Glorified Lord Jesus Christ, I remain

Yours in Christ,

Reverend James B. Bissonette  
Diocesan Administrator