



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Catholic Diocese of Charleston responds to COVID-19**

CHARLESTON, SC – The below message was released earlier today from Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone.

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With the CDC deeming COVID-19 (coronavirus) a pandemic, we know there are many questions you may be receiving about what steps the Diocese is taking to reduce the spread of the virus. Below is our plan for the upcoming weekend.

As of now, state officials have NOT recommended or mandated that public events be canceled, but the CDC has encouraged the more vulnerable populations to avoid large crowds. Based on that recommendation, all Masses this weekend should go on as planned.

However, Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone is granting dispensation for Masses this weekend to those who are at high risk for adverse health complications from COVID-19, or do not feel comfortable attending Mass. The Catholic Catechism (2181) allows you to miss Mass as a result of illness.

Regarding Mass, Bishop Guglielmone asks that the following temporary precautions be made. It should be noted that these changes are only temporary and are being done out of prudence and charity with the greater good of the faithful in mind.

- Remove Holy Water from the hand-fonts, and if available, have hand sanitizer at all entrances.
- Remove missalettes, hymnals, etc. from the pews and consider one-time use worship aids.
- Suspend the exchange of the Sign of Peace or announce that it can be done with a simple bow. Also, no handholding during the Lord's Prayer.
- Suspend the distribution of the Precious Blood during Holy Communion.
- Saliva can be a very potent form of transmission of the virus. Given the frequency of direct contact with saliva in the distribution of Holy Communion, we highly recommend that distribution only be in the hand.

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- Keep the gifts of bread and wine covered on the credence table -- no offertory gifts procession.
- Re-enforce procedures for having Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion sanitize their hands prior to and after distributing Communion.
- Priests be extra vigilant that all vessels used during Mass are properly cleaned after each use.
- If possible, during the collection, limit the number of hands touching the basket.
- Assure the faithful they are not obliged to attend Mass if they are sick and staying home can be an act of charity towards their fellow parishioners.

The CDC recommends the following actions to protect yourself and others from transmitting the coronavirus:

1. Stay home if you are sick.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
4. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
5. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
6. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue then throw the tissue away. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.

If you wish to stay home from Mass, but wish to participate virtually, there are several ways to watch Mass online or on television. Here is a list of some recommendations:

- **St. Mary's in Greenville:** Sunday at 11 a.m.
  - [facebook.com/stmarysgvl](https://www.facebook.com/stmarysgvl)
- **St. Michael in Garden City:** Sunday at 9 and 11 a.m.
  - [www.saintmichaelsc.net](http://www.saintmichaelsc.net)
- EWTN broadcasts Mass on its television network
  - [www.ewtn.com/tv/schedule](http://www.ewtn.com/tv/schedule)

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