

Shelter-in-Place Mandatory Order and Guidelines

Dear Friends in Christ,

I just received an email (7:01 Friday evening) from Bishop Ron Hicks, the Vicar General for Cardinal Cupich, ordering the following:

Governor Pritzker has just announced a mandatory shelter-in-place order for the State of Illinois. What this means for our parishes is that effective 5 p.m. Saturday, March 21 through Tuesday, April 7:

- **All churches and adoration chapels must be closed and locked until the order is lifted by the governor. Private prayer in any parish building must be discontinued until the order is lifted.**
- **There can be no live Stations of the Cross or any other gatherings anywhere on parish/school property, nor can any parish personnel be involved in organizing them on any other site.**
- **All weddings and baptisms must be postponed and can be re-scheduled only once the order is lifted. There are no exceptions to this, regardless of the size of the group. However, in case of an extreme emergency for baptism, please seek the permission of your bishop.**
- **Funerals and wakes must be postponed until the order is lifted.**

(Note: Priests can – and are encouraged – to continue celebrating Mass privately and to livestream their Masses for their parishioners, if possible. Moreover, anointing of the sick and confession/absolution guidelines will be forthcoming.)

- **Parish offices must be closed until the governor's order is lifted.**

The text above is excerpted directly from Bishop Hicks's email to the clergy and parish staffs of all of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Therefore, as of 5:00 tomorrow (Saturday, March 21) evening I will have to keep the church locked in obedience to the Cardinal and his Vicar General.

Certainly, I am sad to do these things. I'm sure the Cardinal, Bishop Hicks and all the bishops and priests of the Archdiocese are sad as well. I know that you are also sad because you love God and want to spend time with Him at Holy Mass, in Eucharistic adoration and prayer, and in the reception of the other Sacraments. Despite our sadness and disappointment, and having learned lessons from the spread of the coronavirus in China and Italy, as well as other countries, the Cardinal and all the clergy of the Archdiocese are concerned for your protection from illness.

As Bishop Hicks encouraged, Fr. Alex and I will continue to offer Mass privately every day for the intentions scheduled in our bulletin, for all our parishioners, for the Church, and for the world. As we bring heaven to earth on the altar of the Sacrifice of the Mass, may we also bring God's healing of body and soul to all the world. May the Mass not only deliver us from pandemic disease but, more importantly, expiate the sins of the world which cause us so much more pain and disease of the soul.

I long to see you back in our beautiful parish church, assisting at Holy Mass and receiving the Sacraments. I hope and pray that this exile ends swiftly and that we can be in God's Holy Presence together. Until then, let us pray for each other.

May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts,

Fr. Bart