

**PLEASE NOTE:
THE FOLLOWING REPLACES THE BULLETIN ARTICLE FOR THIS
SUNDAY.**

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

As we face the reality of COVID-19, we are called to make responsible decisions for the immediate parish community taking into consideration how our practices may affect people beyond our parish community

To that end, and in light of the directives of Governor DeWine and Archbishop Schnurr, it has been determined that all non-essential gatherings and meetings will not take place until further notice. This includes, but is not limited to:

❖ all parish committees and organizations	❖ Wednesday Lenten series
❖ Parish School of Religion (PSR)	❖ youth group
❖ funeral luncheons	❖ athletic team practices & games
❖ small faith communities, prayer, and adult faith formation groups	❖ groups which are not technically part of the parish but use parish facilities

EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY are the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Bountiful Hearts, and groups that assist the poor (such as the group that provides lunches for children when school is not in session) since these ministries will be especially necessary to assist those who are in need. It is expected that the number of people in need will greatly increase during this time.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL is closing at the end of the school day on Monday, March 16th for three weeks in accord with Governor DeWine's order. The reason for not closing immediately is that parents need to provide day care and the teachers time to inform the student what they need to take home for work during this down time.

MASS & LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

Although religious gatherings are expressly excluded Governor DeWine's order, Archbishop Schnurr and the bishops of Ohio, out of concern for the common good and the physical as well as the spiritual well-being of the people, have agreed to cooperate with the governor's direction to create "social distance".

Therefore, at least until March 30, 2020:

- 1. Catholics are dispensed from the obligation to participate in Sunday Mass.**
 - ❖ Nonetheless, Sunday and weekday Masses will be celebrated for those who wish to attend. (This may change according to developing situations.) The Mass times remain the same as before the pandemic.
 - ❖ Those who have any symptom of illness are expected to stay home, and parents with children displaying symptoms are expected to keep them at home. This is an act of charity for the protection of others as well as for the good of the individual.
 - ❖ Those who have compromised immune systems which in anyway increase the chance of complications from COVID 19 are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to stay home.
 - ❖ Anyone who wishes to watch Mass on Sundays, can go to <https://www.stpeterinchainscathedral.org/> and scroll down.

- 2. Already scheduled baptisms and weddings may take place as scheduled.** Funeral Masses may be celebrated, but, as much as possible those whose health are compromised are urged not to attend. St. John's will not be available for visitations or funeral lunches.

- 3. Non-sacramental events**, (i.e, Stations of the Cross and 24-hour Eucharistic exposition) are cancelled. The Eucharistic chapel will be available as it has been. Those who are sick are asked not to visit the chapel.

- 4. Adaptations for health reasons to the celebration of Mass until further notice:**
 - ❖ Parishioners are NOT to exchange handshakes before or after Mass.
 - ❖ In accord with the directive of the Archbishop, the baptismal font has been emptied.
 - ❖ The unconsecrated bread and wine should be kept out of public areas. Therefore, the Procession with Gifts will be suspended. We will, however, allow the collection to be taken up in part before beginning the Preparation of the Gifts in order that the collection will not compete with the Eucharistic Prayer.
 - ❖ Holding hands during the Lord's Prayer is not permitted. (Actually, this is not part of the Roman Rite, anyway.)
 - ❖ At the Sign of Peace, people will offer each other only the words "Peace be with you," with NO handshake.
 - ❖ Eucharistic ministers will wash their hands before Mass (as has been the directive before the pandemic) and clean their hands with sanitizing gel when they come forward to distribute and after distribution. The priest will do the same.
 - ❖ Reception of the host on the tongue is discontinued.
 - ❖ Reception of Communion from the cup is discontinued.

CARE OF THE SICK

Fr. Kemper will be available for emergency and non-emergency sick calls unless a health care facility determines that clergy may not visit.

THE PARISH OFFICE will be open as usual during this time. and individual appointments with the staff member will take place as scheduled unless you are notified otherwise.

I ask for your understanding in these decisions. The staff feels that these policies offer protection to our community and beyond. Of course, if conditions change, we will adapt the policies as necessary.

I also ask for your prayers for all who are affected by the virus – the sick, the dying and the souls of those who have died, the grieving, those who are alone and isolated from loved ones, and those who are economically affected by this crisis. May the healing hand of Christ touch us all.

Grace, peace, and health to all of you,

Fr. Jeff