



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

## *Office of Communications*

### Frequently Asked Questions regarding COVID-19

*These questions are answered based on recommendations from local and state officials as of March 17, 2020. Answers are subject to change as new guidelines are issued and we receive more information.*

#### **Will I still be able to have a funeral Mass for my loved one?**

It is important that we mourn with families. For the time being, all funerals are to be celebrated without Mass and limited to 50 or fewer attendees.

A committal service at the cemetery may be celebrated outdoors with a memorial Mass to be celebrated at a later date. This will allow family and friends to participate in a Eucharist offered for their departed loved ones when the celebration of public Mass resumes.

#### **May I have a funeral luncheon at the parish?**

No.

#### **Will I still be able to celebrate my wedding at Church?**

A wedding occurring between March 17 and April 5, 2020, should be celebrated without Mass and follow the current guidelines of fewer than 50 people in attendance. Weddings scheduled after April 5 will be re-evaluated in light of future health mandates. Please contact your parish office.

#### **Is my parish food pantry open?**

Parish food pantries should remain open at this time and follow instructions from local and state health officials.

#### **Is our evening of penance: “The Light is ON for You” still scheduled as normal?**

Yes, “The Light is ON for You” and individual confessions should continue as scheduled at this time.

#### **Without public Mass on Palm Sunday, will I still be able to receive blessed palms?**

Yes. Arrangements for the provisions of palms have not been finalized. The diocesan Office for Worship will work with parishes to find a way to distribute blessed palms in a safe and reasonable manner.

#### **Will we have our usual liturgies for Holy Week and Easter?**

Liturgies have been suspended through April 5, Palm Sunday. The diocese will be issuing an update for Holy Week and Easter in light of any further directives from state officials.

**What is meant by “our priests will continue to celebrate Mass each day without a congregation?”**

Every Mass is, essentially, a communal act of prayer. Not all celebrations of Mass, however, are announced and accessible to the broader public. It is in this sense that our priests will be offering Mass privately over the coming weeks. The Church normally requires that the communal nature of the Mass be expressed through the participation of at least one other person with the priest celebrant. However, current norms in place to protect public health provide just cause for celebrating without the participation of another member of the faithful (can. 906). Therefore, for the time being, Mass will not be celebrated at the parish’s regularly scheduled times and the lay faithful will not be informed of the time of celebration. Again, these restrictions are meant to safeguard public health. Priests may not invite the laity to attend their private Mass.

**May Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament take place in churches open for private prayer?**

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a liturgical celebration and is, consequently, suspended together with other public liturgies and devotional services. The faithful are invited to pray to Christ present in the tabernacle.

**Are adoration chapels to remain open?**

No, adoration chapels should be closed during this time as well.

**May parishes find ways to organize more public Mass times and resume Masses with fewer than 50 participants?**

No. The temporary cancellation of ALL public Masses in the diocese stands through April 5, 2020. The diocesan directives are meant to eliminate contact between people.

**May the clergy distribute Holy Communion outside Mass for the faithful who come to churches to pray?**

No.

**Are the sick who are homebound able to continue to receive Holy Communion?**

No. Viaticum, however, may be taken to the dying. Our priests will continue to celebrate the sacrament of the anointing of the sick for those who begin to be in danger due to sickness or old age.