



## CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WICHITA

Office of the Bishop

424 N. BROADWAY | WICHITA, KANSAS 67202

### Statement of Bishop Carl A. Kemme Regarding Suspension of Public Masses in the Diocese of Wichita.

Dear Priests, Deacons, Religious and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Wichita,

With deep sadness but also with confidence that this decision is the right one and in collaboration with the bishops of Kansas, I decree that effective at 1:00 p.m. March 17, 2020 and until further notice, all public celebrations of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Diocese of Wichita are suspended. This action is taken, after prayerful discernment and in light of evolving developments of the pandemic of the Coronavirus, COVID 19. This unprecedented action, though painful and challenging for the life of the Roman Catholic Community is intended to assist in helping reduce the potential spread of life-threatening infection within the general population.

With this decree, the following applies to all parishes, chapels, and religious houses in the Diocese of Wichita.

- All masses offered by priests are to be private, according to the Liturgical Norms and not open to the public. Pastors are reminded of their canonical obligation to offer one mass per week for the people.
- The Faithful are encouraged to participate in live stream masses or on EWTN.
- The Faithful are highly encouraged to practice the time honored tradition of Spiritual Communion, as well as use this time, particularly on Sundays for reflection on the Sacred Scriptures for the day, recitation of the Holy Rosary, The Divine Mercy Chaplet or other devotions. The Office of Worship will be providing resources to help the faithful enter into this period of prayer and absence from the Eucharist.
- Funeral Masses are to be offered for the deceased with only immediate family in attendance and with social distancing. Priests may wish to recommend Christian Burial with a Memorial Mass to follow at a later date.
- No funeral dinners or luncheons are to be held
- Baptisms outside of Mass may be celebrated with only the parents, godparents and immediate family of the person being baptized.
- Please consult with the Diocesan Chancery about previously scheduled weddings for the months of March and April

*"Put your gifts at the service of one another."* 1 Peter 4:10

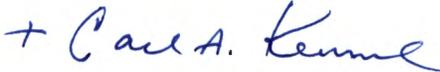
- Quinceañera's are to be postponed
- Confessions are to be heard only behind the screen and not face to face.
- All Stations of the Cross, Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration, etc. are to be canceled during this period of time.
- All events, meetings and the like are to be canceled until further notice.
- Confirmations, First Reconciliation, First Communions are to be postponed until after this crisis has ended.
- Unless otherwise determined at a later date, this also applies to Holy Week, the Chrism Mass and Easter Sunday.

For families in our Catholic Schools, please watch for correspondence from Superintendent Janet Eaton and/or your parish school principal. The decision on how to proceed with the education of the Kansas youth will be made in the coming days.

On behalf of our pastors, I want to humbly request that the faithful continue to be good stewards by financially supporting our parishes so that they can remain current in their bills and payroll responsibilities. Sending in your contributions or opting for online giving will help us remain viable for the future. Thank you for your generosity.

Questions and concerns may be directed to our staff at the Diocesan Chancery. We will do our best to provide answers to your questions.

Dear People, let us continue to offer our heartfelt prayers for one another during this crisis, for recovery of the sick, for those who care for them, for a speedy end to this crisis and for strength to endure whatever may come. Let us use this time well by putting Our Lord at the center of all our lives. Our faith needs to be strong in every form of trial, confident that God is with us. DO NOT BE AFRAID! Please know of my daily thoughts and prayers as we face this time of testing, trial and distress together.

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Bishop Carl Kemme