



# St. Joseph – St. Lawrence Parish

P.O. Box 129  
Easton, Kansas 66020

Father Francis Bakyor, Pastor

Telephone 913-773-5712

March 13, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

The following documents have recently been received from the Archdiocese. I've included them below for you to read:

## **March 13, 2020: Statement of Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann Regarding Dispensation from the Obligation to Attend Sunday Mass**

Effective immediately, and until further notice, I have dispensed the faithful of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.

Despite the suspension of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, all regularly scheduled Masses will remain open to the public for those who wish to attend. I encourage those who can attend Mass to do so and join together in prayer for the health and protection of our entire community and for an end to this crisis. In addition to attending Mass, if able, I encourage all families and individuals to pray the rosary, invoking the intercession and protection of our Blessed Mother, Health of the Sick, for these intentions and for the health and well-being of our brothers and sisters who are ill, for their caretakers, and for all doctors, nurses, medical and emergency preparedness personnel.

Do not come to Mass if you are sick, if you have been exposed to the coronavirus, if you suspect you have been exposed or if you have been advised by your doctor not to attend Mass.

**TO:** Pastors, Parochial Administrators and Priests of the Archdiocese  
**FROM:** Fr. John Riley, Chancellor  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Pandemic Response  
**DATE:** March 13, 2020

Effective immediately, and until further notice, Archbishop Naumann has issued the following directives regarding parish operations and liturgies:

- The faithful of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. A public statement is attached.
- Effective Saturday, March 14, 6am, pastors are to cancel all non-essential parish gatherings and formation activities other than regularly scheduled weekday and Sunday Masses, Funerals and Funeral Masses, and Baptisms. Regularly scheduled individual confessions should continue, including Wednesday evening confessions. A decision on Communal Penance Services for pastoral regions will be made at a later date.
- All Confirmations scheduled through March 31 are postponed and will be rescheduled at a later date. A determination on Confirmations scheduled April 1 and beyond will be made at a later date.
- A decision on the Chrism Mass will be made at a later date.
- Pastors will decide for their own parish(es) on an individual basis whether to reschedule First Holy Communion Masses. They may wish to observe First Holy Communion at regularly scheduled Sunday Masses rather than at a separately scheduled Mass.
- Holy Communion distributed on the tongue in the Ordinary Form of the Mass is hereby suspended in keeping with the prescriptions of Canon 223 regarding the rights of the faithful. This suspension does not apply to Masses offered in the Extraordinary Form. Those faithful who do not feel they are able to receive Holy Communion on the hand, or those who feel the need to refrain from Holy Communion for any other reason, are encouraged, according to immemorial practice, to remain in their pew and prayerfully unite their intention(s) to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by making an act of Spiritual Communion.
- Pastors are to suspend the distribution of Holy Communion by extraordinary ministers to nursing homes and hospitals, and suspend the celebration of Mass at nursing homes or assisted living residences. Distribution of Holy Communion to the homebound is left to the discretion of the pastor. Priests shall continue to administer the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum as usual.
- Pastors are to encourage the faithful in continued prayer as mentioned in the public statement attached. Pastors should communicate to their parishioners the need to reach out to those not in attendance at Mass. As far as possible, pastors may wish to establish a mechanism whereby those absenting themselves from Mass can email or call the parish office to inform the pastor. Pastors should

consider asking volunteers to call those abstaining from Mass attendance to check on them and offer them the prayers of the parish community.

- Pastors are to remind their parishioners of the ongoing financial needs of the parish and how they may continue to make their regular offertory gifts by mail or electronic fund transfer. A link to a one-hour webinar is attached for pastors and parish staff to view in light of the pandemic. The webinar presented by Nic Prenger of Prenger Solutions Group provides information for the following: quick guide on how to livestream Mass, resources for Catholic families, communications plan and ideas for your parish, and tips for parish staff working remotely. [Click here for webinar.](#)

Above all, Archbishop reminds all clergy and the faithful that this is a time for greater prayer, not less. Families and individuals are encouraged to pray the rosary, asking our Blessed Mother to intercede for the health and protection of our families, our loved ones, our community and our nation.

**TO:** Pastors, Parochial Administrators and Priests of the Archdiocese  
**FR:** Fr. John Riley, Chancellor  
**DT:** March 13, 2020  
**RE:** COVID-19 Pandemic Response

### **Chancery Offices:**

In light of the present public health situation, having heard the recommendations from experts about the benefit of social distancing during a pandemic and in a spirit of abundant caution, Archbishop Naumann is issuing the following directives:

- Effective Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> the Archdiocesan Chancery Offices will be closed to the public until further notice.
- Nonessential meetings to be held at the Chancery should be cancelled until further notice.
- Employees will be informed by their supervisor if they are required to report to the chancery or expected to work from home. The goal is to minimize the number of people working in close proximity to one another.
- Employees who are requested to work from home, and are able to, will be expected to do so.
- Employees who are not requested to report to the chancery, but are unable to work from home will receive pay for two weeks. The situation will then be reevaluated.
- Employees who are quarantined and unable to perform their duties remotely, will receive pay for up to two weeks. The situation will be re-evaluated at that time.

### **Parishes:**

Parish Pastors, Parochial Administrators and Faith-Community Chaplains, should assess the nature of their respective parish office functions and consider implementing similar actions at the parish level. When employees are able to carry out work functions from home, that option should be seriously considered.

### **Schools:**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, and based on available evidence, children do not appear to be more susceptible to the COVID-19 virus than adults. Children confirmed to have had the virus have generally presented with mild symptoms. However, it is possible that children with underlying medical conditions could be at higher risk.

The Archdiocesan School Office is in regular contact with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Johnson County Emergency Management, and other localities, to monitor and plan for the impact of the COVID-19 virus on schools. Schools should follow the recommendations from the Archdiocesan School Office, as well guidance and directives from their local health department and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Sincerely,

Father Francis Bakyor, Pastor