



*St. Stephen Deacon and Martyr
Catholic Church
17500 South 84th Avenue
Tinley Park, IL 60487*

*Phone: 708-342-2400
Fax: 708-342-1545*

Reverend Thomas Bernas, Pastor

Dear Saint Stephen's Parishioners,

With you, we are watching as more individuals and communities are impacted by the spread of COVID-19 (the "novel coronavirus"). Our thoughts are especially with those for whom this global public health issue is immediate and personal.

We are adhering closely to guidelines from The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health, and the Illinois Governor's Office, which officially declared a state of emergency on Monday, March 9th.

In a spirit of love and care for our neighbors and the larger city, we are writing today to share key decisions made for the coming weeks:

Based on current guidelines from local public health departments, which recommend the cancellation of public gatherings involving 250 or more people, Cardinal Cupich mandated the suspension until further notice of all liturgical services effective tomorrow, starting with Saturday evening and including the regularly scheduled weekend services. In addition, he has mandated the closing of schools, religious education programs operated by the archdiocese, and parish offices until further notice.

This means that there will be no scheduled Masses or church services until further notice. All religious education classes and parish meetings and events have also been cancelled until further notice. The church will be open on Sundays from 9AM until 12 Noon for private prayer.

In the meantime, we are encouraging everyone to watch Mass on television or on the internet. Some options include:

WGN TV Channel Nine Sunday Mornings at 9:30AM

EWTN Cable Channel – Daily 7AM and 11AM
Monday – Saturday 6PM Sunday through Thursday 11PM

Catholic TV Network

Watch online Mass LIVE on CatholicTV.org or on CatholicTV's iPhone or Android apps.

Monday-Friday at 9:30 am ET from CatholicTV's chapel

(rebroadcasts at 7 & 11:30 pm)

Saturday 9:30 am from Toronto's Loretto Abbey

Saturday 7 & 11:30 pm

from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Sunday 10 am from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame

4 pm from San Antonio's San Fernando Cathedral

7 & 11:30 pm from Boston

"This was not a decision I made lightly," said Cardinal Cupich. "The Eucharist is the source and summit of our life as Catholics. And our schools and religious education programs provide essential services to many thousands across Cook and Lake Counties. But, in consultation with leaders from across the archdiocese, for the sake of the safety of our students, parishioners, and all the women and men who serve the people of the archdiocese, it is clear that we must take the better part of caution in order to slow the spread of this pandemic."

Because this situation is evolving rapidly, we will continue to communicate with you in the days ahead.

We feel the sadness and anxiety of this moment, and this was not a decision we took lightly. We weighed many options, and we believe that this is a moment when we must continue to look beyond ourselves and take action to care for each other and the larger world.

We hold in our hearts all those who have been touched by this disease. And more than ever in this time, we lean on each other to be a church of courage, responsibility, and hope.

Fr. Tom Bernas
Pastor