



Office of Archbishop Alexander Sample

April 6, 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

On March 16, 2020, I issued a decree suspending the celebration of public Masses throughout the Archdiocese until April 14, 2020. I did so with a very heavy heart, hoping that this state of affairs would only last a few weeks. It has become clear, however, that the impact of the COVID-19 virus is very far-reaching and will be with us for some time. On March 23, 2020, Oregon's Governor Brown issued an order mandating that state residents remain at home until further notice except for essential work and trips to obtain necessary supplies. On March 31, 2020, the President issued similar guidance for the entire month of April to slow the spread of the pandemic.

In order to be in accord with government directives and protect the people of the Archdiocese, I am therefore extending the suspension of all public Masses in the Archdiocese of Portland until further notice. I am likewise dispensing all of the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation until further notice. Priests will still be offering Sunday and daily Masses privately and I remind you of the many opportunities now available to participate in livestreamed liturgies at your parishes and at the Cathedral, especially during Holy Week. I will reinstate the public celebration of the Holy Mass at the soonest date possible, following the recommendations of public health and other civil officials.

We must continue to remember that the Holy Eucharist remains the source and summit of the Christian life and pray that this time of fasting from it will bring forth abundant fruit for the Church. May we look forward with greater eagerness to the joy of the resurrection and as always, remember those most afflicted by the present situation.

In the mystery of Christ's passion, death and resurrection,

Most Reverend Alexander K. Sample
Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon

MOST REVEREND
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DECREE

EXTENDING MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Whereas the Governor of Oregon, on the 23rd of March 2020, issued Executive Order 20-12, directing “to the maximum extent possible, individuals stay at home or at their place of residence” until further notice;

Whereas the President of the United States, on the 31st of March 2020, issued *Coronavirus Guidelines for America: 30 Days to Slow the Spread* continuing to advise staying home and limiting social gatherings to ten persons or less for at least the month of April;

Whereas it is the duty of the diocesan bishop as pastor to be concerned for all of the faithful entrusted to his care (c. 383 §1) and to act with charity toward all (c. 383 §3-4);

Further to the measures enacted on the 12th and 16th of March 2020, with all the reasons listed therein remaining applicable;

I hereby decree, in virtue of my duty to direct, promote, and guard the liturgical life including the celebration of the sacraments (c. 835 §1), that the suspension of all public Masses previously decreed is extended until further notice.

Therefore, in virtue of canon 87 §1 and for the reasons expressed above and previously, all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon and others actually present in the Archdiocese remain dispensed until further notice from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and other holy days of obligation (c. 1247).

All, nonetheless, are bound to keep holy the Sabbath by abstaining “from those works and affairs which hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body” (c. 1247) and by “devoting themselves to prayer for a suitable time” (c. 1248 §2).

I order that this decree and dispensation be made known to all concerned, especially pastors and administrators, who are to be attentive, also, to all existing and forthcoming pastoral guidelines.

This decree and dispensation shall take effect immediately and remain in force until revoked.

Given at the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon on this 6th of April 2020, everything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Most Rev. Alexander K. Sample, J.C.L.
Archbishop of Portland in Oregon

Sr. Veronica Schueler, F.S.E.
Chancellor

