



Go Make Disciples

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY

March 16, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Circumstances related to the spread of the coronavirus are changing daily in Oklahoma. As more cases are confirmed, more measures to protect the vulnerable must be put into place.

Beginning Tuesday, March 17, and extending through Sunday, April 5, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will be closed. This includes all athletic events and extracurricular activities.

I also am extending the temporary precautions for churches in the archdiocese through Sunday, April 5.

The temporary precautions are as follows:

General dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass;

- Avoid, cancel or postpone non-essential events and meetings;
- There will be no elimination of scheduled public Masses;
- Parishioners who are elderly, those in weakened health conditions, parishioners who are ill or have symptoms of illness, and those who may have been exposed to the Coronavirus should not attend Mass;
- Confessions should be made behind a screen whenever possible;
- Holy Water fonts should be emptied for the duration of the Lenten Season;
- Priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands thoroughly before and after Mass, and use hand sanitizer before distributing Holy Communion;
- Avoid physical contact;
- Temporarily discontinue the distribution of the Precious Blood at Mass;
- Avoid shaking of hands at the Sign of Peace and during the customary greeting of parishioners by the celebrant before and after Mass;

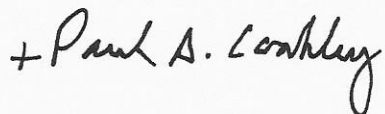
- In charity, communion in the hand is strongly encouraged to avoid contact with the tongue, except in the Extraordinary Form of the Mass;
- All should cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or use the inside of the elbow;
- Social distancing should be practiced;
- Remove hymnals from pews;
- Consider ways to avoid passing the collection basket through the pews;
- Encourage parishes to stop practice of parishioners moving hosts into the ciborium;
- Encourage parishes to stop practice of parishioners bringing forward hosts prior to communion.

We will continue to monitor the rapidly changing situation and will adjust our precautions as needed.

Let us come together in prayer for all of our brothers and sisters around the world who are sick and for health care professionals, caregivers and civic leaders who are working tirelessly to respond to this pandemic.

May the Divine Physician be with all those affected by this illness and restore us quickly to health and a sense of wellbeing."

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Paul S. Coakley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City