



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
PITTSBURGH
NEWS

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**DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ANNOUNCES BISHOP'S CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY FUND
AND ONLINE GIVING TO ADDRESS CRITICAL NEED**

The Diocese of Pittsburgh and its parishes are feeling the negative impact due to a sharp decline in weekly offertory donations since the suspension of public Masses because of government restrictions associated with the coronavirus. To help Catholics support their local parishes, the Diocese of Pittsburgh is working with them to set up online donation areas on their individual websites. People will also be able to donate to parishes, schools, or diocesan ministries of their choice, at the main diocesan website: <https://www.diopitt.org/help>, with an option for one-time or recurring gifts. People who prefer traditional means will still be able to mail financial gifts to their parishes.

Donations to The Bishop's Coronavirus Emergency Fund will provide an extra layer of financial support to parishes that are struggling. Funding will also help our Catholic schools, and staffing necessary to support the mission of the Church.

"Our website partners at eCatholic tell me that parishes in other areas that have been using the eGiving platform receive 40-60% of their collections online. Those parishes have been able to maintain or even increase their funding through this health crisis. Here in our diocese, only about 10% of our parishes are set up for online giving. We are blessed to have generous people in Pittsburgh who want to give. We need to work quickly to make it easy and safe for more people to do so," said Jennifer Antkowiak, Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations.

Administrators are having to make difficult decisions regarding staffing and services in an effort to manage many financial challenges. Diocesan pastoral staff is already working with parishes and parish groupings to provide resources for successful business plan assistance. Cost-cutting methods, including layoffs at the parish and diocesan level may be needed.

"Suspending public Masses in our diocese was a heartbreaking decision from a spiritual standpoint. It was also frightening from a financial standpoint, yet it was a needed decision for the health and safety of our community. That was the priority," Bishop Zubik said. *"Like other Catholic dioceses around the country, we have been experiencing a decline in Mass attendance, and offertory collections for months. I knew that suspending Masses would create an even greater financial strain but given the nature of the health threat posed by COVID-19, it was the right thing to do."*

In an effort to provide spiritual care, the diocese and many individual parishes are moving Masses and prayer services online, with live stream and recording viewing options. *"As a pastor, my biggest concern is that some*

people are perceiving that God has turned His back on us, and so we should turn our back on Him. Nothing could be further from the truth. He is with us through it all, working to give us a greater understanding as a Church, of what others are experiencing,” Bishop Zubik said. “With God as our Father, just like any family, we will work together to navigate through these challenges. I thank everyone, in advance, for their support.”