

## **GUIDELINES ON HOW TO HEAR CONFESSIONS BY APPOINTMENT DURING A PANDEMIC**

The Diocese of Sioux City has adopted the policy during this health crisis for their priests to only hear confessions by appointment; that is to say, no scheduled confession times are to be held as confessions are to be arranged by the penitent by calling the parish office or rectory. The following guidelines must be observed in this diocese regarding confession:

- 1) Confessions are to be individual and by appointment.
- 2) So-called “drive thru” confessions are not allowed. It is acceptable if a penitent wishes to remain in their vehicle for confession, but in order to assure privacy and distance, no congregating in lines (either in vehicles or in person) is allowed.
- 3) Social distance must be kept at all times. This means a minimum of 6 feet between the priest and penitent, though more recent studies and epidemiological opinions have stated that 8 feet is preferable. A further precaution, if desired, is the use of a facemask.
- 4) Confessions are not to take place in rectories. They may either take place in the parish office, the open space of the church (such as the narthex or in a pew), or outdoors.
- 5) Proper sanitation should take place after each confession that is heard indoors. This includes wiping down the surfaces that the penitent may have touched.