



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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Letter of Most Rev. Michael J. Hoepfner, Bishop of Crookston Regarding the COVID-19 March 18, 2020

Dear Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of Crookston,

Lent is always for us a special time of prayer, sacrifice, and charity. The invasion of the coronavirus has certainly now provided us with added reason for prayer, sacrifice, and charity. We join with our brothers and sisters in America and throughout the world to adjust our way of living for our own health, the health of our neighbor, and to do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus. In addition to the steps that we have already taken, with this letter/decreed the following applies to all parishes, chapels and religious houses in the Diocese of Crookston effective March 20, 2020:

- **All public celebrations of the Holy Mass are cancelled.** All Masses offered by priests are to be private, according to the Liturgical Norms and not open to the public. Sunday remains a holy day and, although dispensed from the obligation to attend Holy Mass on Sundays, the faithful are encouraged to observe the Lord's Day by watching Mass online or on TV and by making a "spiritual communion."
- **There are to be no Communal Penance Services.** Individual celebration of the Sacrament of Penance may be held. It is recommended that penitents make use of the screen in reconciliation rooms.
- **Baptisms**, may be celebrated outside Mass with only the parents, godparents, and immediate family present and no more than 10 persons present.
- **Funerals and weddings** with Mass may be celebrated with no more than 10 persons present.
- **Church buildings** may remain open, according to the local custom, for visits and personal prayer. All gatherings, meetings, events of more than 10 people are to be cancelled for this time.

These steps are preventative. We do not want this virus to come here; once it is here, it's too late. The above directives will remain in effect until further notice. We will continue to keep you up to date on developments through the Communications Office of the Diocese of Crookston. In the near future, we will communicate the plans for this year's celebration of the Chrism Mass.

My dear People of God, let us continue our Lenten journey of prayer, sacrifice, and charity, particularly mindful of all who suffer because of the coronavirus and any other disease or illness. Let us ask our Good God to grant us good health, to help us show concern for the health of our neighbor, and do all we can to slow the spread of the coronavirus. And let us ask the intercession of our Dear Mother Mary, Health of the Sick.

Sincerely, in the name of the Lord Jesus,

+Most Rev. Michael J. Hoepfner
Bishop of Crookston