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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Pastors of Parishes Subject to Stay-at-Home/Shelter-in-Place Orders  
Copy: Deans  
From: Diocesan Chancery  
Date: March 26, 2020  
Subject: Guidance for Parishes

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Dear Fathers,

Attached, please find guidance applicable to those churches located in jurisdictions where stay-at-home/shelter-in-place orders have been issued.

Other pastoral matters not addressed in these or previous guidelines are left to the prudent judgment of each pastor.

Thank you.

## **Guidance for Churches Under Stay-at-Home/Shelter-in-Place Orders**

Clergy and others are expected to fully observe the local orders. So that pastoral care of the faithful remains paramount, the following guidelines apply to those locations under stay-at-home/shelter-in-place orders. Parishes should continue to look for innovative ways to spiritually support the faithful, including livestreaming of Masses and supporting the catechesis of the faithful through electronic means.

1. **Parish offices** are to be closed and employees, as they are able, are to work from home.
2. **Funerals** and **weddings** are suspended. Priests should coordinate with funeral directors when families request the rites proper to funerals. Graveside services may still be permitted, depending on the local provisions and provided those who attend observe proper social distancing.
3. **Baptisms** are suspended. Where there is a real danger of death, the person should be baptized in the hospital or home of the parents. In danger of death, the faithful should consult with their pastors.
4. Priests are to continue to celebrate private **Mass** daily and to fulfill Mass intentions, including the obligation of pastors to offer the Sunday Mass for the people of the parish. Priests may continue to be assisted by a deacon and/or adult server, with due regard for the physical distancing requirement.
5. Priests should consider the best options for the private celebration of **confession** for those in dire need of the sacrament.

Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (*cf.* CCC, no. 1452).

6. **Anointing of the Sick** for those in dire need of the sacrament should still be performed in the home of the individual or in the hospital or healthcare facility, following the directives of the diocese and healthcare facility (*cf.* Instruction of March 25, 2020).

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