



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Communications • *The Long Island Catholic* • *Fe Fuerza Vida*

50 North Park Avenue, Rockville Centre, NY 11570

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DATE: March 24, 2020 at Noon

RE: DRVC Announcement Update

FROM: Sean P. Dolan, Director of Communications

Note: This information was sent to all priests.

Public Liturgies. It was announced that as of Sunday, March 22 at 8:00 PM, in compliance with the Executive Order of the Governor of New York State, no further public liturgies are permitted until further notice. This includes funerals, weddings, baptisms, and any other cause for gathering people together in the church, other than private prayer.

Emergency sacraments are permitted, as always, but while exercising the proper health precautions. Burial services may be offered if possible, while observing all safe distance precautions, and should be done at the grave site. Wake services should no longer be conducted. Both wakes and funeral (memorial) Masses can be postponed.

Private Masses and live streamed or recorded Masses /devotions are still permitted. Pastors can have a very small group of assistants for filming if necessary, but maintaining the proper precautions.

Churches. Following instructions from the office of the Governor, churches can remain open for private prayer, while maintaining the proper precautions regarding distancing and groups of people congregating. However, no public liturgies are permitted.

Because the Governor is permitting churches to remain open for private prayer, we are also permitted to have maintenance personnel keeping the churches clean. However, we realize that this may not be possible in every parish for various reasons. It is up to the prudent judgment of the pastors to assess the particular circumstances for their parish and make appropriate decisions.

Pastors are encouraged that if at all possible, to keep churches open for prayer. Together, we are all suffering spiritual deprivations. Access to prayer in the churches, especially in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, is so deeply needed at this time.

Only essential personnel for essential operations as defined in the Governor's executive order are permitted to work on premises. This may include outreach personnel. However, proper precautions must be observed. All others **must** work from home. These prudential judgments must be made by pastors.

Distribution of Palms for Palm Sunday. Pastors should not plan to distribute Palms or make them available at this time. Palms will be blessed in parish churches on Palm Sunday and will be made available to the faithful at a later date.

Confession. Confessions may not be advertised or scheduled. However, confession can be conducted when urgently needed and when requested on a case-by-case basis. Please observe the safety precautions outlined in previous memos.



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Spiritual Communion. The Faithful are encouraged to unite themselves to the Lord Jesus and to each other in “Spiritual Communion”, which is part of the rich history of the Church’s teachings. When the Faithful cannot access the Sacraments, especially the Body and Blood of Christ present in the Eucharist, they purify their hearts and ask God to allow them to be united with Him spiritually.