



Office of the Archbishop

# Archdiocese of Mobile

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March 17, 2020

To: All Clergy in the Archdiocese of Mobile

Dear Brothers,

Our world, our nation, and our communities are coping with the covid-19 pandemic. All of us are called to be concerned for our personal welfare and that of our neighbors. This will entail sacrifice. I ask that we pray for our own protection and the healing of those who suffer from ill health. It is also important that we cooperate with civil and health authorities.

Therefore, effective Wednesday, March 18, the following steps are to be taken in the Archdiocese of Mobile:

Catholic Social Services throughout southern Alabama serve approximately 25,000 of our neighbors in need. These services will continue in the following manner:

Emergency Assistance Ministries at our Social Service Centers will remain open providing food for families and individuals, clothing, and help with rent and utility bills. However, applications for this help will be received only by phone. Food and clothing will be distributed at the door and not within the Service Center.

All Thrift Stores will close but clothing will be available for those in need through Emergency Assistance.

Counseling for individuals and families will continue to be available but only by phone.

Parishes may continue to provide food, whether from food pantries or kitchens, but only on a takeout basis and not within a building. Other than takeout food, all other parish and school activities, meetings and classes are cancelled.

This includes all worship services. No member of the laity or clergy may conduct a worship service or a devotion of any kind in a church, oratory, chapel, or other location. I am strongly

requesting that our churches remain open for prayer but without services. However, perpetual adoration chapels are to be closed.

Priests have permission to celebrate private Masses, which means only the priest and one server may be present. These Masses may be celebrated in the church building but only at a time that the church is locked. These private Masses may be broadcast through social media.

Funerals, with or without Mass, will not be celebrated in churches or in any other location. Only graveside services are permitted.

Weddings, only without Mass, may be conducted in a church building but solely with a cleric, bride and groom, two witnesses and the parents of the bride and groom present. No one else may be present.

Confessions may continue but only with a screen separating the priest and penitent, or in an arrangement with six feet space between the priest and penitent.

Baptisms may be celebrated but only with the parents, godparents, and one cleric present.

Anointing of the Sick is to continue. Priests are to be diligent about not contaminating their oil stock by reinserting their thumb without first thoroughly washing their hands.

Clergy may continue to bring Holy Communion to the sick but Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may not do so except in cases where it is done by a member of the immediate family. Clergy may bring Holy Communion to the sick but are to exercise greatest prudence when doing so.

Holy Water fonts are to be emptied and cleaned.

Clergy who have the coronavirus are to notify the Vicar General immediately.

If an employee is not needed at a school or parish and is sent home, the employee is to continue to receive their salary.

Parish offices should operate with staff only. The presence of volunteers is strongly discouraged during this time.

These norms are effective through and including Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020 but may be extended depending upon future developments.

Although we will not gather for worship, we remain united in Christ. I am confident that our dedicated clergy will continue to serve the spiritual and material needs of neighbor. I particularly request that we be present to the sick and those who suffer difficulties. I ask the people of our Archdiocese to please pray. Even if we cannot receive Holy Communion we can join ourselves with the love of God. Prayer is powerful and I request that we pray even more fervently during these challenging days.

As Catholics we are committed to the common good. These actions may be sacrificial for our people but in the interests of the good of neighbor. Please understand, and please explain to your parishioners, that no exceptions will be made.

May God bless all of us.

Sincerely in the Lord,

*+ Thomas J Rodi*

Most Reverend Thomas J Rodi  
Archbishop of Mobile