

Health Directives

March 16, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

This is one of the most difficult letters I have written as a pastor.

The Diocese of Rockville Centre, along with various levels of government, is following the advice of the medical experts regarding the limiting of personal contact with others during this time of medical emergency.

The directives I received from the Diocese include, in part:

Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 at 3:00 PM, all Masses (weekday and weekend), liturgies, devotions, meetings, and non-essential activities in our parishes are suspended or postponed through Tuesday, April 14, 2020. This will include all Holy Week and Easter Liturgies. However, these will be televised and available online.

What this means to us concretely is:

that there will a suspension of all societies and ministries and their current meetings.

Evening prayer and benediction will be temporarily suspended

Any baptisms scheduled during the affected times will be postponed until after the suspension is lifted.

The Homebound Communion Ministry is temporarily suspended (by definition many of those receiving are at the higher risk levels)

St. Raphael's Religious Educations program had already been suspended for the remainder of the year. The first confessions will need to be rescheduled and any other dates are now in flux.

Any or all of these conditions will be monitored and updated as necessary

I urge you to please see these steps not simply as the church following guidelines set up by the state and civil authorities, but rather at a specific point on which we agree; this is truly intended as a protection of the more vulnerable. We take these steps so that we, even unknowingly, may not infect or cause harm to one of our brothers or sisters who may be in a more vulnerable position than we. We are also aware that we don't know where the exact limits of anyone's level of vulnerability may be, even our own.

Even though we may not necessarily be in the same building at the same time, we are still, we are always, in it together. Now and forever – TOGETHER.

And so we pray – for each other

And so we pray – for our Church

And so we pray – for the world