



GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

The following Guidelines are to be observed throughout the Diocese of Kalamazoo, from March 20, 2020, through Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020, at which time they will undergo review in light of the circumstances present at that time. Priests, Deacons, and all Parish Leaders are to see that all of the Guidelines are followed for the good of all during this health crisis. The Guidelines are delineated according to the following categories.

1. The Sacramental and Liturgical Life of the Church

Priests in particular should be mindful of their obligation to “serve rather than be served”, after the example of Christ, the High Priest, Who “gave Himself as a reason for many”. While parish offices are closed and parish activities are temporarily curtailed, the clergy have a unique opportunity to enkindle apostolic zeal in their care for the sick, the dying, and all in any type of need. The charitable works of the parish should be intensified, and our living out of the mission of the Eucharist should be our joy.

1.1. Celebration of the Eucharist

- a. All of the Faithful are dispensed from the Obligation to assist at Sunday Mass from March 20, through April 5, 2020; all public celebrations of the Eucharist are temporarily suspended during this time.
- b. The faithful are strongly encouraged to participate in Masses that are broadcast via television and internet, including our own Diocesan live-stream Mass, and to make a devout Spiritual Communion (see resources below).
- c. Participating in online broadcasts of the Mass – an overview and explanation
What are we missing in not going to Mass? ([section 1.1 C added 03/24/2020](#))

The Celebration of the Eucharist, which we commonly refer to as ‘going to Mass, is the opportunity to participate in the single most important event in the history of the world. At Mass, time is suspended, and we mystically participate in the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, all at once. The fullness of grace is poured out in the Mass in a unique and special way. All grace flows to us through the Cross of Christ, and we participate in the Paschal Mystery at every Mass. This actual grace is significant; it is the highest form of grace we can receive as we participate in Jesus’ offering up of Himself to the Father. However, sometimes the faithful might forget about the very real graces they can receive whenever they assist at the Mass. This grace is powerful in aiding those in Purgatory on their way to Heaven, in causing conversions, in healings, and in all of our needs. When we cannot attend Mass, we are not able to receive that same grace, but grace is available nonetheless. So we can receive grace outside of the celebration of Mass but those graces are different.

During this time of trial, when we are not able to go to public Masses, many are turning to a

live-streamed Mass. This option has been available for some time in different methods for those who are ill or homebound. There are now many parishes and pastors quickly trying to get online, and have become creative in their ways to stream their Masses to the public. So the question arises: is watching or even participating in a live-streamed Mass the same as being at Mass? The quick answer is no. If the obligation were not lifted for the public at this time a live-streamed Mass cannot fulfill the obligation. However, as we continue to use theology to inform the proper use of technology, we can see that especially during this time there is a benefit to attending a live-streamed Mass.

While participating in a live-streamed Mass does not offer the same graces as participating in person, all participants will have the grace of the prayers they say, the Scriptures they hear, and the community with which they come together to participate. Live-streamed Mass will aid in the faithful being connected. While we know that we are connected as the Body of Christ, being isolated due to health, or even currently due to government restrictions, hinders the feeling of connectiveness. Observing and participating in a live-streamed Mass will help to mitigate the distancing, as well as to find healing and comfort in times of need. It is an opportunity to unite our prayers together as a community, and to ask for God's healing on our world. Finally, it also stands as a way during this time to keep holy the Lord's Day. The effect on the weekly spiritual life of the faithful that attend a live-streamed Mass cannot be understated. Physically, we continue to participate in the longing for the unity of Heaven and Earth. When Mass is again open to the public, those who have continued to participate in the Mass in these methods will be best prepared to again participate fully in the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist at Mass. A live-streamed Mass presently provides the best means by which the faithful are most able to participate fully, as they enter into the Mystery in real time.

When participating in a live-streamed Mass, it is best to participate as fully as you are able. Prayerfully settle your mind, pray each prayer, listen to the Scriptures, perform the gestures, and devoutly pray an Act of Spiritual Communion. Ask the Holy Spirit to stir up within you a longing for the day when you can again receive Our Lord in the Eucharist. It is a time to increase our desire for the day we can again fully, actively, with all our conscience, participate in the Mass, and receive the full graces that are offered by being present at and praying faithfully in the Holy Sacrifice.

Pre-recorded Masses still offer grace, if one cannot to participate in a live-stream Mass. While we pray and listen to the Scriptures, we receive the grace of God. However, these Masses are less ideal, as they separate out the active participation with the community. Every effort should be made to allow the faithful during this time to participate in a live Mass. If you are only able to observe a recorded Mass, know that grace is available in the hearing of the Scriptures, and in the prayers of the faithful watching. A recorded Mass, like a live-streamed Mass, will still assist those seeking to avail themselves of the opportunity to keep that weekly commitment to keep the Lord's Day holy.

While we earnestly pray daily for an end to this pandemic, and a return to the regularity of the life of the Church, this use of technology can provide a partial remedy to the faithful, in order that very soon so they may be able to participate fully at the Mass.

- 1.2. All priests are to celebrate Mass each day. This applies also on one's day off or during time away for vacation or rest. There is nothing greater a priest does for the sanctification of the Church and the salvation of the world than to celebrate Mass.

- a. It is important to remember that all scheduled Mass intentions must continued to be fulfilled, including the obligation of the *pro populo* Masses each week.
 - b. For Masses without specific intentions, priests are encouraged to offer their Masses for all of those affected by the Coronavirus, especially the most vulnerable, and for an end to the crisis.
 - c. Priests and Deacons are strongly encouraged to redouble their efforts in caring for the vulnerable: those who are sick, the elderly, and those in need of basic assistance.
 - d. In responding to those in need of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum, please pre-arrange access to your parishioners and faithful with all healthcare institutions in your parish(es).
 - e. Diligently and strictly follow all health precautions and protocols at all times.
 - f. During this time of crisis, and in order to care for the pastoral needs of the faithful, all vacations and travel outside the Diocese should be postponed. We cannot afford to have any priests debilitated, detained, or quarantined at this time.
- 1.3. Eucharistic Adoration, and Perpetual Adoration in particular, are to continue uninterrupted; parish churches should be open and unlocked to be available for private prayer before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.
- 1.4. The Sacrament of Penance
- a. More scheduled opportunities for individual Confessions are to be made available to the faithful, especially during the Lenten Season. [The practice of having Confessions only “by appointment” is not permitted, as anonymity cannot be maintained.]
 - b. Enclosed confessionals should not be used at this time, but suitable areas should be provided in a more open environment; confidentiality and protection of the Seal of Confession are of utmost importance. Confessional screens should be used, both to protect the penitent’s right to anonymity and as a barrier of the spread of germs.
 - c. No communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance or General Absolution are permitted at this time.
- 1.5. Anointing of the Sick and Care of the Sick
- a. The faithful who are ill should be tended with spiritual sustenance in their time of need. Every effort to bring spiritual comfort to them should be made.
 - b. The care of the dying must be a top priority, and Holy Viaticum and the Anointing of the Sick are not to be delayed when needed. Access to healthcare institutions should be pre-arranged in case of an emergency.
 - c. No communal celebrations are permitted at this time.
 - d. All precautions and protocols mandated by healthcare institutions are to be strictly followed.
 - e. Only priests and deacons may take Holy Communion to the sick at this time; the assistance of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is suspended for the time being.
- 1.6. Baptisms and Confirmations
- a. Baptisms may certainly continue, but new holy water should be used for each individual Baptism.

- b. Baptisms are to be done individually, with only the parents, godparents, and immediate family present, following all health protocols. [No more than 50 people and following social distancing procedures.]
 - c. Baptism by immersion is not permitted at this time.
 - d. Scheduled Confirmations are being reassessed; more information will follow.
- 1.7. Weddings and Funerals
- a. It is recommended that, if possible, weddings should be postponed for the time being. If the couple wishes to proceed, then only immediate family should participate (10 or less), and social distancing should be employed. Please note that you can certainly avail yourself of available technology (such as offer a “live stream” of the wedding or using a video conferencing tool) to be viewed in another location. As determined previously in the guidelines, receptions are not permitted at this time on Church property (**updated 03/26/2020**).
 - b. It is strongly recommended that Funeral Rites be held without a public Mass. The priest is to celebrate a private Mass for the repose of the soul on the day of the burial, ensuring that other Mass intentions for that day are fulfilled appropriately. The family may certainly decide to have a Memorial Mass at a later date. While there is no public Funeral Mass, the interment with an abbreviated Liturgical Service may be held at the cemetery, outdoors, if possible, observing all the necessary and prescribed precautions (social distancing, etc.) (**updated 03/26/2020**).
 - c. Receptions and luncheons in parish facilities are not permitted.
 - d. Health precautions are to be observed.
- 1.8. The Chrism Mass and Sacred Triduum
- a. While these holiest of liturgies will certainly take place, details will be forthcoming.
 - b. The Chrism Mass will take place as scheduled on Holy Tuesday, but at St. Augustine Cathedral, and restricted to only the priests of the Diocese. More details about time will follow.
 - c. All Parish celebrations of the Sacred Triduum are to remain as scheduled; more information will follow.
- 1.9. Care and Concern for the Clergy
- a. All clergy are to strictly follow all health precautions and protocols in their daily ministry.
 - b. Clergy should take care to tend to their own good health and appropriate rest.
 - c. Priests in the “at risk” category, due to compromised health or age, should be realistic as to what they can reasonably do to minimize any health risk to themselves or others.

1.10. Resources:

<https://osvnews.com/2020/03/14/the-why-and-how-of-making-a-spiritual-communion/>

<https://austindiocese.org/spiritual-communion#.XnEmTpPPFBA.email>

<http://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/praying.html>

<https://mycatholic.life/catholic-prayers/>

2. Parish Life

- 2.1. Parish Office hours are to be determined at the discretion of the pastors. All parish facilities should be deep-cleaned to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The Diocesan Pastoral Center is closed to the public from March 20, 2020. Contact by phone or internet for necessary requests.
- 2.2. School gatherings, events, meetings and activities
 - a. All onsite face-to-face gatherings, activities, events and meetings (non-liturgical/sacramental) are suspended through April 5th.
 - b. This includes parish-sponsored meetings (such as Knights of Columbus meetings, Scout meetings, Parish and Finance Council meetings, etc.) and all “outside”, non-parish group meetings (e.g. AA, Driver’s Education training, etc.)
 - c. Fish fries and other food services must be take-out only.
 - d. All offsite parish meetings are to be suspended through April 5, 2020.
 - e. Essential staff meetings are not included in these guidelines; Pastors/Principals are encouraged to use these guidelines and recommendations regarding social distancing and precautionary hygiene as outlined by CDC guidelines, as well as government orders.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
 - <https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus>
 - f. Alternate means of meeting via conference call or video are highly encouraged.
- 2.3. Parish Religious Education

This time should not be a time away from the requirements of the faithful to be educated on the faith. For normal Parish Religious Education, even though we may not meet at the parish, every family should ensure that their children are continuing to learn about our Faith and our relationship with the Lord.

In order to assist these parents in their role as the primary educators of their children we are offering the following ideas and opportunities:

- a. Parishes should consider scheduling a time for the parents to come pick up packets (with lesson plans, books if they are not regularly sent home, and other ancillary material) so the parents may do the lessons at home with the students. These may also be scanned and emailed home.
 - b. For those parishes with a FORMED subscription, we would encourage you to select a family friendly series and ask the family to complete these at home during this time.
 - c. The Diocesan Secretariat of Parish Life and Lay Leadership is producing a weekly lesson based on the Year of the Eucharist that will be available at www.diokzoo.org/sundayexperience. These can be completed weekly at home as a family.
- 2.4. Sacramental Preparation
 - a. First Confessions:
First Confessions scheduled during this time can occur, but must be adapted to follow current CDC and Michigan Executive Orders. We recommend that First Confessions are scheduled individually and may be done in the church according to the proposal for the

Sacrament of Reconciliation during this time. There may be small groups that could have a reconciliation service with penitents and parents that number no more than 50 or the current CDC recommendation.

b. First Communion Preparation:

During these weeks approaching Easter we know many parishes are in the final stages of the preparation time for their students. Please send any material you would normally cover during this period to your students and their families to complete at home.

- If your parish has the FORMED subscription you may require the parents and children to complete the “Presence” program on it.
- Depending on the ability to prepare the students well before First Communion, it may be prudent to delay First Communion to a later date.
- If you have a retreat scheduled for your First Communion class during this time, you will need to postpone it. If you cannot postpone it before the First Communion Mass is scheduled, the Diocese will have an at-home Jesus Experience for families to do, which will hopefully create a retreat-like experience for the family.

c. Confirmation Preparation:

- During these weeks approaching Easter, we know many parishes are in the final stages of the preparation time for their students. Please send any material you would normally cover during this period to your students and their families to complete at home. If you are using “Decision Point” or “Chosen”, please direct the families to the videos online.
- For many, their retreat experience may have been scheduled during this period. The Diocese will have an at-home “Jesus Experience for families to do, which will hopefully create a retreat like experience for the family.

d. RCIA:

- The Scrutinies may be held at the Church, with a Liturgy of the Word, in groups of no more than 50, and be presided by a Priest or Deacon. These may be held on the proper Sunday, or during the next week. If you must split up your group, or someone does not want to leave their house, you may also do these at their home. For the laying on of hands you may just extend hands over the head. It is recommended that you include the presentation of the *Our Father* as part of the Third Scrutiny.
- You may continue to meet to discuss and form the Elect and the Candidates for the sacraments. If your group is larger than 10 divide into groups and meet separately.

e. Sunday Experience for the People:

During this time of difficulty and separation from the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith, we need to do all we can to hold onto the great faith as it has been passed down to us. During this time we will long for the opportunity to receive again Jesus’ Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, and in the meantime we can all practice the Act of Spiritual Communion. This will give us the opportunity to share in the grace that poured forth through the Cross, as celebrated daily by our priests in their private Masses. We ask the faithful to participate as they can with a televised or live streamed Mass. During the time of Communion they may pray the following prayer as an Act of Spiritual Communion.

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

As a part of this time away from the Eucharist we are preparing information on our website at www.diokzoo.org/sundayexperience for all households to create a Sunday Experience that will allow them to “keep holy the Sabbath” and maybe even enter into a deeper time of prayer and penance while we await the return of Our Lord at public Masses.

This site will include:

- Information on creating a Prayer Space at home
- A “how to” on Lectio Divina (Divine Reading – a special way to read the scriptures and holy books as a prayer) for both adults and children
- Liturgy of the Word for each Sunday that can be done at home
- Reflection questions to discuss the readings of the week
- Video reflections for each week
- A list of national and local resources of homilies and reflections
- Collection of prayers and devotions
- Information on signing up for the online classes offered via IMD through Franciscan University’s Catechetical Institute

3. Communication

During this time it is crucial to enlist all avenues of Parish communications channels to engage with your Parish family.

3.1. First steps

- a. Gather Parish leadership (virtually if needed) and create a Communications plan. Consider how you will use all channels to ensure you can reach parishioners.
- b. Pick a few tools and commit to updating them regularly so your Parish knows where to find information.

3.2. Engaging New Venues

- a. In the wake of this ever-changing reality, it can be overwhelming to take on new methods of communication, but it will be crucial to engagement with your parish family.
- b. Diocesan Communications is available to assist with website updating and other communications consultation, such as helping you set up a template for an e-newsletter or training on a new technology.
- c. We also encourage you during this busy time to enlist the aid of volunteers. We are happy to assist in training them in the platform

3.3. Websites

- a. The Diocese will offer a number of shareable “modules” for those using the eCatholic platform, and links to our resource pages for those on different website platforms. You are encouraged to use these to help disseminate information.
- b. Also, we strongly encourage Parishes that do not currently have a website to consider participating in the Diocesan website initiative. Please contact Vicki Cessna and sign-up here <https://diokzoo.ecatholic.com/> so we can have your website up and going quickly. This will be a great tool to use to update your Parish Community now and ongoing. There will be no charge for this.

4. Finance and Human Resources

Since it is without question that we can anticipate Offertory decline, due to decreased attendance, the following measures are needed:

- 4.1 Each parish is asked to gather and send electronically some rudimentary information to Ed Carey, ecarey@diokzoo.org, which will provide the basis for an initial telephone conversation to put together a plan for your parish:
 - 1.) The most current Balance Sheet and Income Statement.
 - 2.) A very basic cash flow projection for each month through the end of June, 2020. **This should assume offertory collections at 50% of their current level and current costs.**
 - 3.) A copy of your most recent Paycor payroll register.
 - 4.) Please provide the name and phone number of the material preparer and Ed Carey will call you upon receipt of the material.
- 4.2 Each parish should reach out to parishioners and encourage them to remain faithful to their offertory giving because parish expenses continue. Encourage them to use the mail or utilize electronic giving. If you do not currently provide the option of electronic giving you should give it serious consideration. Do not overlook the electronic giving functionality built into the E-Catholic platform many of you are currently using.
- 4.3 Looking at the human resources side of the current situation in which we find ourselves we have to be open and frequently communicate with our employees about what is happening and what we are planning to do about it. Everyone already has health concerns on their mind and the increased strain of not knowing about the financial situation of their employer and what that means regarding their pay and benefits is a needless complication.
- 4.4 Each of your situations is different and we will have to discuss it during our phone call. However, we strongly urge you to continue to retain all of your employees through this present crisis time. We at the Diocesan Pastoral Center have managed to make arrangements with most of our employees to be able to productively work from home. For those who cannot we have committed to continue their pay without the requirement that they utilize their Paid Time Off.
- 4.5 If during the preparation for a plan going forward you reach the determination that lay-offs are a necessary part of the solution then Edward Carey can guide you through that process. The rules on unemployment benefits are in flux right now in the State of Michigan and nationally. We are in ongoing conversations with Michigan Catholic Conference about these emerging developments.
- 4.6 Notes regarding Essential Staff under Executive Order No. 2020-21 (**section 4.6 added 03/24/2020**)
 - 1.) Essential staff:

Please read section 4 of the governor's executive order carefully. While the overall order is "to be construed broadly to prohibit in-person work that is not necessary to sustain or protect life", section 4 does outline some of the considerations which you may consider as exceptions to this broad interpretation particularly with regard to "conducting minimum basic operations". From a parish and school perspective I certainly would consider scaled

down maintenance, security and some business operations to fit into this category of conducting minimum basic operations. Remember that this only applies to in-person work, not remote or homework that requires employee notification. The last paragraph of section 4 (b) provides guidance on providing valid notice. Regardless of whether you think that you will be requiring the in-person work of any of the people in your organization fitting these categories it is recommended that you notify them now in case you do need them later.

2.) Financial controls:

One other area for your consideration is the counting of offertory receipts received in the mail or dropped off at the rectory. While the volume of these gifts is probably going to be far lower than your usual offertory volume, there are still internal control considerations. Your bookkeeper should already be familiar with internal control protocols for cash received in the office. However, if nothing else remember that more than one person must be present when mail is opened, cash and checks should be counted by two people and the tally should be signed by both of them, and the deposit slip and proceeds should be taken by two people to the bank for depositing. Of course, please adhere to social distancing protocols and other safety measures during these actions.

3.) As we requested last week in the “Guidelines and Resources” please review Section 4.1: Each parish is asked to gather and send electronically some rudimentary information to Ed Carey, ecarey@diokzoo.org, which will provide the basis for an initial telephone conversation to put together a plan for your parish:

1.) The most current Balance Sheet and Income Statement. 2.) A very basic cash flow projection for each month through the end of June, 2020. This should assume offertory collections at 50% of their current level and current costs. 3.) A copy of your most recent Paycor payroll register. 4.) Please provide the name and phone number of the material preparer and Ed Carey will call you upon receipt of the material.

If you have any questions regarding these aspects of the governor’s executive order please call Ed Carey in the diocesan business office (269-808-4101) or ecarey@diokzoo.org.

1. Resources

Live stream and recorded Mass

Check the Diocesan Facebook page for Livestream of Mass with Bishop Bradley

Additional avenues:

- i. EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/tv/watch-live>
 1. Masses streamed multiple times daily (find daily schedules here: <https://www.ewtn.com/tv/schedule>)
- ii. Daily Mass with Bishop Robert Barron: <https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass/>
 - iii. Sunday Mass with Catholic Extension, live at 10 a.m., recording available all day - <https://www.catholicextension.org/stories/sunday-catholic-mass-online>
- iv. [List from the AOD](#)

Facebook Live – This is a great tool to use to stay connected to your Parish family. See this related step-by-step guideline. Good uses could be short messages from the Pastor, praying the Angelus at Noon as well as streaming Mass.

My Parish APP – many of the Parishes have this and it's a good time to promote. If you have Diocesan as your Bulletin provider than you have the ability to have this at no additional cost.

Zoom – video teleconferencing services. This is a great tool to use for remote meetings. It's free if meetings are limited to less than 40 minutes. There's a nominal charge afterwards.

Enewsletters: Now's the time to send information via email. We recommend [MailChimp](#), [Popullo](#), [Constant Contact](#).

Flock note – Texting service and also can choose to send email format. First XX are free; additional participants cost.

Ways to Stay Connected with your Parish Community

Pray: Ask Parishioners to specifically pray for one another by name; use Parish Directory as resource. Agree to one time during the day that everyone will stop and pray.

Check out these resources:

- vi. [The Pray More Lenten Retreat](#)
- vii. [ProjectYM Sunday Virtual Retreat for youth](#)
- viii. [Live stream Adoration](#)
- ix. [CRS Rice Bowl Stories of Hope - Videos to watch as a family](#)

Card campaign: Send encouraging cards, notes and letters to fellow parishioners, especially those who live alone. Have families adopt other parishioners to connect with on a weekly basis.

Phone Tree (<https://imgs.dialmycalls.com/dmc-blog/advanced-phone-tree-template.pdf>)

1. Use this to spread parish update (either via call or text) quickly
2. Or set up a phone tree just to check in on those who may want someone to talk to during these days of social distancing

Website: Keep Parish website up-to-date with latest news on possible Mass and event cancellations. Use website to promote e-newsletter sign-up and mobile app **Facebook Live – use**

Facebook Live to stream short encouraging messages from your Pastor, Parish staff and Parishioners

Facebook Groups: use these to keep your Parish groups connected;

E-newsletters: Begin sending bulletins or weekly announcements directly to your parishioner's emails

3. Mailchimp is an easy to use e-newsletter platform
4. Can embed a code on Parish website for easy sign-up

Texting: Get started or continue using mobile apps like MyParishApp, Catholic Parish App or Flocknote.