

Statement of Bishop John B. Brungardt
Regarding Cancellation of Public Masses in the
Catholic Diocese of Dodge City due to the coronavirus crisis
March 16, 2020

"Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

In conjunction with the bishops of Kansas, effective 1 p.m. March 17, 2020, and until further notice, all public celebrations of the Holy Mass in the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City are cancelled except for funeral Masses. *Funeral Masses* must be limited to no more than 50 people, including clergy, assisting ministers, family members and friends. No funeral luncheons may be held. A *Funeral Liturgy outside Mass* must be limited in size as above. In addition to celebrating the funeral Mass or funeral liturgy outside Mass, families and pastors are encouraged to schedule Memorial Masses for their loved ones in the future, when public health restrictions are relaxed, so that larger numbers may gather if desired.

Reviewing my announcement of March 13: "Until further notice, I have dispensed the faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City from the obligation to attend Sunday Holy Mass."

All *Communal Penance Services* are cancelled. Priests should continue as much as possible to offer individual confessions at regularly scheduled times. Confessions are to be heard only behind a screen or other barrier and not face-to-face. At no time should there be more than 50 people gathered in the church waiting for confession.

Baptisms may continue but only parents, sponsors (godparents) and immediate family members who are asymptomatic may attend, and in no case more than 50 people.

I encourage all of the faithful to continue to join together in *prayer* to our Loving God for the health and protection of our diocese, nation and world, and for an end to this crisis. I encourage all families and individuals to pray with the Bible, pray the rosary and other devotions, and invoke the intercession and protection of our Blessed Mother Mary, Health of the Sick, for these intentions and for the health and well-being of our brothers and sisters who are ill, for their caretakers, and for all doctors, nurses, medical and emergency preparedness personnel, medical researchers and elected officials.

Do not come to any public gatherings if you are sick, if you have been exposed to the coronavirus, if you suspect you have been exposed or if you have been advised by a doctor not to go out in public or attend public gatherings. Please assist others in this crisis, especially the elderly and poor.

Further guidelines will be given to our priests. Thank you for your faithfulness and prayers.

"When [Jesus] disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick" (Matthew 14:14).

For more information from our public health authorities:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Kansas Department of Health and Environment website: <http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/index.htm>