

All public masses in the Diocese of Gallup to be canceled

Written by By Suzanne Hammons Director of Communications Diocese of Gallup
Friday, 27 March 2020 08:00

At this time, the geographic region of the Diocese of Gallup has one reported case of COVID-19. However, surrounding regions have experienced new cases over the past several days. In response to the increasing prevalence of the disease, the civil governments of both states (N.M., Ariz.), have placed restrictions on the size of meetings and schools have been canceled. The Federal Government of the United States urges no meetings of more than 10 persons. The surrounding dioceses have all dramatically curtailed most activity of the Church in their area of authority.

Current Directives

After consultation and prayer, Bishop James Wall hereby issues the following diocesan directives, effective immediately and indefinitely, pending further directions:

The faithful of the Diocese of Gallup and those visiting are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation.

Churches and chapels may remain open for private prayer and exercises of devotion according to schedules set by pastors and parish administrators. The bishop encourages the faithful to intensify their prayers and pious practices. Protocols for social distancing must be observed, such as practices of maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet between persons or families. The limit of 10 persons within a confined space should be maintained.

All public Masses are suspended until further notice, including Sunday, daily Masses and all Holy Week liturgies. Other liturgical services and public devotions are also canceled. This includes Confirmations.

All priests of the diocese are expected to continue daily celebration of the Holy Mass in private with prayers for the comfort and protection of the faithful and their communities.

All Catholic schools will remain closed until public schools resume classes.

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All adult and children's religion classes are suspended.

Special upcoming events are either canceled or postponed, including:

Priests' Day of Sanctification (April 2, 2020): Bishop Wall will celebrate the Christmas Mass privately and the holy oils will be distributed to each parish.

The Diaconate Ordination scheduled for March 28th is postponed: This will be rescheduled when restrictions are lifted.

Deacons' Day on March 28th is canceled.

All diocesan and parish related events, meetings and gatherings are hereby suspended. This includes:

Routine meetings of organizations, apostolates, and study groups - suspended.

Bingo and public meals: suspended.

Other meetings: Only essential meetings for business purposes should be conducted. Social distancing and open meeting space is strongly recommended. No more than 10 persons.

Celebration of marriage or Masses of Christian burial may be done in private, but with no more than 10 people in attendance. The diocese recommends scheduling a public memorial Mass and Rosary after the crisis has passed.

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The Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession will continue to be offered in the following way: The bishop exhorts all priests of the diocese to make available the Sacrament of Reconciliation as often and as liberally as possible. Confessional booths are not to be used until further notice. The ideal setting for the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be outdoors or in a large room, and one that doesn't require the faithful to be closer than six feet from each other while waiting. Confessions may be heard anonymously or face to face. Bishop Wall exhorts the faithful to avail themselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation on an ongoing basis.

Given the urgency of the novel coronavirus crisis, and in keeping with movement guidelines, these directives are mandatory, effective immediately.

Pastors and Administrators will post large signs on the doors of each church or chapel displaying the following information:

Bishop Wall has dispensed all the faithful from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation until further notice.

The faithful are not dispensed from the Universal Church's discipline of abstaining from meat on Fridays of Lent and fasting on Good Friday. See the diocesan website for guidelines.

Bishop Wall exhorts all Catholics to make a Spiritual Communion with the Lord Jesus through prayer and various spiritual exercises, such as reading Holy Scripture, fasting and Stations of the Cross in private. He encourages the faithful to pray the Rosary every day, especially as families.

The Diocese of Gallup will live-stream the 11:00 AM Sunday Mass and other liturgies at dioceseofgallup.org

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Another option for our parishioners who would like to virtually participate in daily Mass would be

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watching the Mass celebrated on RelevantRadio.com (also available live on the free Relevant Radio app).

The work of the Church continues, even in the midst of the novel coronavirus, especially our service to the poor and those hardest hit by the pandemic.

By Suzanne Hammons
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Diocese of Gallup