

Updated March 24, 2020

Governor Pritzker has ordered a mandatory shelter-in-place order for the State of Illinois. What this means for our parishes is that effective 5 p.m. Saturday, March 21 through Tuesday, April 7, 2020

- All churches and adoration chapels must be closed and locked until the order is lifted by the governor. Private prayer in any parish building must be discontinued until the order is lifted.
- There cannot be live Stations of the Cross or any other gatherings anywhere on parish/school property, nor can any parish personnel be involved in organizing them on any other site.

To offer our people as much pastoral care as possible during this time, please observe the following guidelines for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, and ministering to the sick and homebound, which are in effect until further notice. A note about the Holy Father's recent issuance of a plenary indulgence is included.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Given that our churches are closed and a stay-at-home order is in effect:

- Individual confessions are currently not possible; this includes virtual or phone confessions, which are never permissible, nor drive-thru confessions. Despite the good intentions around such novelty, we must attend to our underlying theological tradition of the sacrament, as well as support the stay-at-home order and its intended purpose – to keep people safe in their homes at this time.
- In keeping with longstanding pastoral practice when penitents' access to the sacrament is restricted, they can be assured that their sins are forgiven if they make an act of contrition with a firm resolve to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation after the stay-at-home order is lifted.
- the faithful should be encouraged to pray particular prayers or meditate on passages of the bible to assist them in seeking the mercy and forgiveness of God and the grace of reconciliation.
- To offer our people as much pastoral care as possible during this time, please observe the following guidelines for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, and ministering to the sick and homebound, which are in effect until further notice. A note about the Holy Father's recent issuance of a plenary indulgence is included.

Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound

Communion to the sick and homebound is suspended to be consistent with the governor's current stay-at-home order.

Anointing of the Sick

Under the State's exemption for essential services, the Archdiocese of Chicago is including anointing of the sick as an essential service. However, **out of an abundance of caution only a select number of priests will be allowed to administer this sacrament to any confirmed COVID-19 patients until further notice.** Therefore:

Christian Burials

Burials at Catholic Cemeteries may continue and are not suspended at this time; however, attendance limit and social distancing requirements apply per below. Please note that our churches are still closed; therefore, funeral Masses are not possible.

However, if a family requests a funeral, there are two options:

1. A funeral service, not a Mass, may take place at the funeral home
 - a. the limit for attendees remains 10 people at this time (inclusive of the funeral director, priest, mourners, etc.)
 - b. All attendees must practice social distancing
2. A funeral service may take place graveside at the cemetery before committal/burial.
 - a. the limit for attendees remains 10 people at this time (inclusive of the funeral director, priest, mourners, etc.)
 - b. All attendees must practice social distancing

Plenary Indulgence

The Apostolic Penitentiary also issued a [decree granting a Plenary Indulgence](#) during this extraordinary time. In light of this, please consider sharing the following with your people:

- As many people are unfamiliar with indulgences it is helpful to review in a simple way the Church's true teaching on this grace:
 - Fundamentally, indulgences (plenary/full or partial) refer to a repairing and healing of the damage inflicted by sin.
 - In the English language, the word "indulgence" carries the connotation of "permission" or "license to do something." In the Church and with regard to sin, this certainly is not the case.
 - In traditional language, this is the "remission of temporal punishment due to sin." That we, through prayer and action recommended by the Church, can engage in this healing and repair is not because of our own efforts, merit, or power.
 - The Church, drawing on the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and the Communion of Saints speaks of drawing grace from the "treasury of the Church."
 - In this moment of isolation and disconnection, the proposal to seek an indulgence re-affirms our connection in the Body of Christ and with the saints.
- The *Plenary indulgence* is granted to the faithful suffering from Coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they:
 - unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion,

- or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters,
- with the will to fulfill the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible, when the suspensions are lifted.
- Please use your parish website, email blasts, etc. to let your parishioners know this information.
- In addition, health care workers, first responders, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus according to the words of the divine Redeemer: 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends' (*Jn 15: 13*), will obtain the same gift of the *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions.
- Especially in this challenging moment, seeking an indulgence is a way of doing something spiritually and a way of praying for ourselves and for others.