



## CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WICHITA

Office of the Bishop

424 N. BROADWAY | WICHITA, KANSAS 67202

March 13, 2020

Dear Priests, Deacons, Religious and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Wichita,

In light of the growing concerns regarding the Coronavirus COVID 19 as it relates to Masses and other religious events, and in light of a recent ban of gatherings of 250 or more people in Sedgwick County the following applies to the entire Diocese, **I hereby grant a temporary general dispensation to all the faithful from the Obligation to attend the Sunday celebration of the Mass until further notice.** Nevertheless, Masses will continue to be offered as scheduled and churches and chapels are to remain open for private prayer and adoration. The faithful who are ill, elderly, immune compromised and therefore vulnerable and indeed anyone who feels hesitant or fearful of being in such gatherings are requested to utilize this dispensation by refraining from attending Mass or other religious services or events. If the faithful choose to receive this dispensation, then I suggest in order to keep holy the Sabbath to spend some time of the day in prayer. It is further recommended that pastors consider canceling, postponing or rescheduling parish events and activities until the crisis has ended. Confirmations are hereby postponed until further notice. Decisions about Chrism Mass and Holy Week masses and services will be made at a future date.

As masses and services are held, I wish to remind everyone of the following:

- **The Exchange of the Sign of Peace is to be discontinued indefinitely.**
- **The Sharing of the common cup for the Precious Blood is to be discontinued indefinitely. Intinction of the Sacred Host in the Precious Blood is not allowed.**
- **Holy Water fonts are to be empty until further notice.**
- **Hand shaking, hugging or kissing is to be avoided before, during and after the Mass.**
- **Priests, deacons and eucharistic ministers are required to exercise diligent hand hygiene before and after exercising their ministry of distributing Holy Communion.**

*"Put your gifts at the service of one another."* 1 Peter 4:10

- **Holy Communion may be received in the hand or on the tongue according to the preference of the communicant and the directives of the GIRM #160 and *Redemptionis Sacramentum* #92. It is however recommended that during this crisis, the faithful be encouraged to receive in the hand.**

I encourage the people of the Diocese of Wichita to use common sense and good judgement in these matters. I know well that many are concerned, anxious and distressed by all of this. Therefore, let us put this where it needs to be, in the hands of God. Please pray for a speedy end to this crisis. If you are well, please pray for the sick; if you are sick please offer your sufferings for the salvation of souls and for the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Let us all pray for our doctors, nurses and health care workers on whom we depend so that our healthcare system will not be overwhelmed, but respond to those in need. May God give us strength, patience and courage during this time of crisis. Please know of daily thoughts and prayers for everyone entrusted to my care as bishop of the Diocese of Wichita.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "x Carl A. Kemme". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Bishop Carl A. Kemme  
Bishop of Wichita