



REVEREND DANIEL B. CARSON

VICAR GENERAL AND MODERATOR OF THE CURIA

Dear Brother Priest,

Please see below the update for today. As we continue to navigate this challenging time, I will keep you informed.

Important Update on MD and DC Mandates

Today Governor Hogan issued a Stay at Home order issued to underscore on-going concerns with health issues in the state. We have evaluated the order and impact on our level of operations in Maryland. **It appears our current level of operations are in line with the recently-issued Order; however, it is important for us to review these issues to ensure all efforts are made to comply with the health concerns our communities are facing.** Please review the further guidance details below:

1. Parishioners should be advised to abide by the Governor's directive to stay at home unless they are engaged in one of the "essential activities" set forth in the Governor's order. Parish offices and schools should only be accessible to essential staff and not generally open to the public.
2. Only staff who are "essential" should be working onsite (i.e., those staff who are necessary to safeguard the property, perform essential administrative or financial functions, or provide other essential functions to keep the parish in operation). Remote or tele-working should be encouraged whenever possible even for "essential" staff.
3. Churches may remain open for private prayer at the discretion of the pastor provided that actions are taken to:
 - a. monitor and take adequate precautions to ensure that no more than 10 people gather inside the church at any given time;
 - b. post a reminder for visitors to abide by the government's social distancing guidelines and other health precautions while visiting the church; and
 - c. maintain appropriate safety and sanitary measures at the parish (making hand sanitizer available, regularly cleaning and sanitizing door handles, common areas, public bathrooms, etc.)
4. Pastors should continue to discontinue/postpone planned events or services (whether indoor or outdoor) that may involve more than 10 people gathered at the parish at any one time. Any events, such as Confession, adoration, drive-thru/drive-up services, etc. must take appropriate steps to ensure that the parish is in compliance with the stated limitations (e.g., having a clergy, usher or staff person

monitor attendance; use a reservation system or online sign-up sheets as a way to stay within the gathering limitation).

Also, today Mayor Bowser issued a Stay at Home order. This order is in line with the directions and precautions for Maryland as noted above for parish operations and for having a church open at the pastor's discretion.

We do anticipate further updates and will continue to keep you promptly informed of any changes. Both the State of Maryland and District of Columbia are actively enforcing the limitation requirement.

Clergy Only Website

The sign in information for the Clergy Website, linked [here](#), is as follows:

Username: clergy Password: resources

Please do not edit the profile or password for this main account as it is shared by all priests of the archdiocese.

Parish Financial Assistance

The Archdiocese is ready to provide financial support to our parishes to enable them to continue to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and minister to the people in our community. This financial support includes potential suspension of various assessments and fees as well as potential loans to parishes that would be repaid when public Masses resume. Please follow the link [here](#) for more information about the criteria the Moderator will use to assess the relative financial needs of the parishes. Included you will see the priorities and criteria that will be used to assess the relative financial needs of the parishes and to prioritize the granting of financial support and also find the document to be submitted by those parishes requesting financial assistance. Should you have questions about this process please contact Ms. Adrienne Willich at willich@adw.org

Guidance from Human Resources Regarding Staffing

The Office of Human Resources has developed guidelines and recommendations to assist pastors in making difficult staffing decisions during this time. All of the employment related materials have been posted on the Clergy Only website, linked [here](#). After logging in, click the button: "Human Resources Covid-19 Employment Resources."

Pastoral Resources

The following pastoral resources, in both English and Spanish, have been designed to help parishioners participate more fully in the Holy Week liturgies. You may want to begin by sending the **Celebrating Mass Online** resource, linked [here](#), then distribute the Liturgy specific resources (**Palm Sunday Without Palms**, linked [here](#), and **Paschal Candle**, linked [here](#)). Additional resources are

being shared with parish catechetical leaders and RCIA team leaders twice weekly, please check with your catechetical leaders for additional resources.

IT Reminder

Please keep IT Security in mind. Pay special attention to suspicious emails. We are seeing an increase in spam and scams. The US Attorney General is warning us about these coronavirus scams:

Individuals and businesses selling fake cures for COVID-19 online and engaging in other forms of fraud; Phishing emails from entities posing as the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other health organizations; Malicious websites and apps that appear to share Coronavirus-related information to gain and lock access to your devices until payment is received; Seeking donations fraudulently for illegitimate or non-existent charitable organizations; Medical providers obtaining patient information for COVID-19 testing and then using that information to fraudulently bill for other tests and procedures.

Weddings Without a Marriage License

In response to inquiries regarding marriages during this time when civil marriage licenses are not being made available, the Archdiocese will consider giving permission for Church marriage celebrations to take place on a case-by-case basis, if there is a serious or compelling reason why the marriage should not be postponed to a time when a civil license can be obtained. Any Church marriage that takes place under these special circumstances must take place in line with gathering limitations imposed by local governments and/or the Archdiocese. The Church marriage will be their true and actual marriage. However, couples must be advised that they will have to have a civil ceremony at a subsequent time after they have obtained a government-issued marriage license. The civil ceremony will be the legal marriage for all official purposes (e.g., governmental benefits, name change on official documents, etc.). Ideally, it is best for couples to wait until civil marriage licenses are available to have their wedding; however, the Archdiocese is prepared to consider special requests for Church marriages during this time when marriage licenses cannot be obtained.

Remind the Faithful of Information on the Website

The archdiocesan website in response to the coronavirus is updated regularly with information, in English and Spanish, for you and the faithful. I encourage you to continue to share the website adw.org/coronavirus/ which includes a [link](#) to find a listing of live stream Masses and prayers.

As ever, should you have questions or need assistance from my office and the Pastoral Center, please let us know. Please be assured of my prayers for you.

With deep appreciation for your priestly ministry, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Reverend Daniel B. Carson

Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia