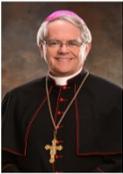


Coronavirus Precautionary Measures

Friday, March 13, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

With the ongoing concerns about Coronavirus (COVID-19), we want to keep you informed of important information coming from the Diocese of Las Vegas and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (SEAS) parish. Please read the letter from Bishop Thomas below followed by the new precautionary measures that have been implemented at SEAS.



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE of LAS VEGAS

March 13, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are living in a time of considerable uncertainty as the Coronavirus (COVID-19 virus) continues to cause illness and death across the global community.

Health officials are advising that this virus continues to spread through person-to-person contact, affecting most especially the elderly and medically vulnerable members of our community.

In light of the danger and uncertainty of this serious emergency, and in consultation with Chancery officials and pastoral leaders, I am authorizing precautionary measures related to the celebration of the Eucharist in the parishes in the Diocese of Las Vegas. These measures are taken to mitigate the spread of this illness in our local community.

Because of this grave and unprecedented moment, I hereby dispense all Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Las Vegas and those Catholics visiting within the geographic boundaries of our Diocese, from the obligation of attending Sunday Masses for the weekends of March 14-15, March 21-22 and March 28-29. This dispensation will be revisited as further medical information becomes available through our local and national health authorities.

I encourage those of you who cannot come to Mass to stay home and read the Gospels (these can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031320.cfm>), pray with your families and to join yourself to the sacrifice of the Mass by making an act of spiritual communion. I also encourage all the faithful that cannot come to Holy Mass to participate via the internet or on television. The Diocese of Las Vegas offers a televised Mass each Sunday at 7:30 am on KFBT-TV (Cox Channel 6). Holy Spirit Parish live streams the 12:30 pm Sunday Mass at <https://holyspiritchurch.org/live-stream-mass/>. There are also multiple Masses available online, some can be found at facebook.com/lacatholics, and mass-online.org/daily-holy-mass-live-online/.

It is important to be reminded that the celebration of the Eucharist is the "source and summit" of the life of the Church, and the obligation to participate is dispensed only for grave cause. I believe that the present circumstances meet that criteria.

At this time I am asking Pastors to continue with the regularly scheduled Masses, exercising the precautionary measures that we have already addressed. Decisions regarding religious education classes and retreats will be made at the parish level on a case-by-case basis.

Given the seriousness of this health emergency, I am asking you to include prayers of the faithful, asking our Lord and His Blessed Mother to protect and bless our families, parishioners and residents of this Diocese from harm and illness. I am asking Pastors and Administrators to include in the prayers of the faithful for these weeks the intentions suggested by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

We ask special blessings on those whose families are suffering from the loss of a loved one, and special blessings on physicians, nurses, health care providers, public health officials and civic leaders.

Please be certain of my prayerful support throughout these difficult days,

I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ George L. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

The Most Rev. George L. Thomas, Ph.D.
Bishop of the Diocese of Las Vegas

Just to be clear, Bishop Thomas has dispensed us from the OBLIGATION TO ATTEND MASS ON SUNDAYS THROUGH THE END OF MARCH. Please note, that our Bishop has NOT directed the suspension of the celebration of Masses at this time. Therefore, we will still offer our regular schedule of Sunday and weekday Masses and Friday Lenten devotions. Our Mater Dei Adoration Chapel will maintain its regular schedule. Our Outreach Food Pantry will remain open to serve those in need of food, but all other food pantry activities such as food rescue has been suspended until further notice. Because Three Square Food Bank has suspended their food contributions to our pantry, we ask that you remember those who will need food assistance at this critical time and consider picking up one or two extra non-perishable items for the pantry. If there are changes to any of the above, you will be notified as soon as possible.

As Bishop Thomas stated in his letter, the Diocese of Las Vegas is continually monitoring the situation. Based on information received from both national and regional health district officials, the Diocese of Las Vegas has already implemented precautionary measures during the celebration of Mass, e.g., suspending the distribution of the Precious Blood at Communion, encouraging the reception of holy Communion in the hand instead of on the tongue, asserting that a verbal greeting is to be used at the sign of peace instead of a handshake or other physical contact, urging clergy and Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion to practice good hygiene and to wash their hands or use an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion and urging those who feel sick or who are experiencing symptoms of sickness to stay home.

To help further prevent the spread of illness, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church has taken these additional steps.

- With the exception of daily and weekend Masses and the Friday Lenten devotions, all meetings of any church groups or organizations are suspended until further notice.

- All children's faith formation programs and youth and young adult ministries and gatherings are suspended until further notice.
- Adult faith formation programs, including RCIA, Welcome Home and Baptism Preparation meetings have been suspended until further notice.
- All meetings and gatherings of parish organizations and non-parish affiliated groups are suspended until further notice.
- All hymnals, Sunday's Word books and Stations of the Cross booklets have been removed from the church and chapel. We will project necessary hymns and responses on the video screens to assist with your participation.
- The wooden hand rests of the pews, door handles and bathrooms have been disinfected and will continue to be cleaned throughout the day.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed around the bathrooms, entrances and other common areas of the church and chapel. A dispenser has also been installed on the pillar by the tabernacle where all Eucharistic Ministers are required to sanitize their hands both before and after distributing Communion.
- The collection baskets will no longer be passed through the pews. This weekend we will ask that you place your offertory donations in the baskets in front of the altar. We encourage everyone to consider making their weekly contributions through our online giving options which can easily be done on the church website www.seaslv.org.
- In addition to the online Masses listed in the Bishop's letter, Sunday Mass can also be viewed on the SEAS church website.

Although the above measures pertain mostly to parish functions and meetings, precautionary measures to protect our parish school students, staff and faculty have also been implemented. Regular updates and important information is being shared with our school families through our parish school administration in cooperation with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Las Vegas.

When it comes to our own health and well-being, it is important for each one of us to be pro-active. Safeguard yourself and others from illness by frequently washing your hands, follow the guidelines published by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) which can be found at cdc.gov and by all means, if you feel sick, stay home.

Keeping up with the most current information regarding all aspects of the coronavirus is a very fluid situation. If we are notified of any new developments that will affect our parish community, we will be sure to share that information with you as it comes in.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Peace always,



Fr. James Michael Jankowski
Pastor