



**Office of the Bishop**  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Lubbock

**DECREE**

March 18, 2020

In response to the worldwide health emergency of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the Catholic Diocese of Lubbock will implement the following policies beginning March 19. This will be in effect through the entirety of Holy Week and until further notice.

Mass:

- All Catholics in the Diocese of Lubbock are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays until further notice.
- No regularly scheduled Sunday or weekday Masses will be celebrated in public.
- Churches of the diocese are to remain open for individual visits for prayer according to their normal opening hours. Pastors may exercise the option to have the churches be open beyond normal hours, with appropriate security measures in place. No groups are to gather for devotions (Stations of the Cross, Rosary, etc.) in our churches or anywhere on parish property. Those praying in the church are to observe a “social distance” of at least 6 feet from other people.
- Parishes are encouraged to use social media, television, or radio to broadcast Masses.
- All are encouraged to make a prayer of Spiritual Communion. Resources for this are available at [catholiclubbock.org](http://catholiclubbock.org)
- While Mass is not available, Catholics are encouraged during this time period to pray at home, meditate on the Scripture readings of the day, and experience the broadcast of the Mass through television, radio, or Internet. A list of stations and sites can be found on the website of the diocese at [catholiclubbock.org](http://catholiclubbock.org).
- Online missalettes are available free of charge from a variety of organizations. A list of such available resources is available at [catholiclubbock.org](http://catholiclubbock.org)
- Pastors should maintain sufficient Consecrated Hosts in the tabernacle for use to distribute as needed and in case the priest should become ill.

Confession:

Lenten Communal Penance Services with the Faithful gathered in the church in large numbers are cancelled. It is recommended that priests be available for individual Confession at times previously scheduled for Communal Penance Services. Priests are asked to maintain regularly scheduled times for Confession and even consider adding additional times to the parish schedule during this crisis. Penitents waiting in line need to maintain a “social distance” of six feet from

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**Most Reverend Robert M<sub>1</sub>Coerver, Bishop of Lubbock**

each other; signs probably need to be posted to that effect. It is recommended that Confessions be heard in rooms that allow for the “social distance” of six feet separation, and if possible provide the option for anonymous Confession. Care must be exercised, however, that structures used to provide for that anonymity be kept distant from the faces of those making their Confession and perhaps be made of materials which will not retain germs on the surface.

Baptism:

It would be best to postpone such celebrations until after the pandemic has run its course. If circumstances dictate, Baptisms may be celebrated with immediate family only (no more than 10 people).

Confirmation:

Pastors of parishes scheduled to celebrate Confirmation before Easter should contact the Office of the Bishop. Receptions are NOT to be held. Pastors of parishes with Confirmations scheduled after Easter will be contacted in coming weeks.

Weddings:

Wedding liturgies must be limited to 50 people or fewer or rescheduled. No receptions are to take place on parish property at this time.

Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum:

Priests will continue to make these sacraments available to those who need them, on an emergency basis. Careful precautions must be taken to avoid the transmission of disease.

Funerals:

We must pray for the dead and bury them. It is recommended that only the Committal Service (Graveside) be conducted at the cemetery and that a Memorial Mass be scheduled after the pandemic has run its course. Funeral Masses may take place, but the congregation size must be limited to immediate family only (a maximum of 20-25 people).

Quinceañeras:

Celebrations of the Quinceañera blessing are to be rescheduled and perhaps celebrated in a communal liturgy after the crisis has passed.

Lenten Fish Fry and Enchilada Dinner activities:

Out of an abundance of caution, such activities must be cancelled.

Parish Activities:

No groups of more than 10 people are to gather on parish property. At all times “social distance” of six feet is to be practiced.

Faith Formation Gatherings and Classes:

All are cancelled until further notice. Catechetical resources will be available on the diocesan website.



### Family Life:

This is an important time in the lives of families. It is essential that families follow the guidance of all authorities to do the proper things and take all necessary precautions to protect the health of family members and others with whom they may come into contact. This is an opportunity for families to draw closer together by sharing time and activities within the home. Our Church has always taught the family is the first school of faith for children. Now, more than ever, that principle needs to be put into action. This is a time for the Domestic Church of the home to draw together in prayer. Sharing faith through prayer, study, and conversation can bear much fruit, turning the difficulty of the present moment into a blessed time for growth in faith. Resources for the spiritual life of our families can be found on the diocesan website.

### Parish Offices:

Parish offices may remain open as long as precautions are scrupulously observed. Each parish will make decisions appropriate to their needs and setting.

### Diocesan Offices:

Diocesan offices are scheduled to remain open. It is recommended that as much as possible all business be conducted via email. Some employees may begin working from home, so it is best to call before making a trip to the office to ascertain whether or not the person intended to be seen will actually be in their office.

### Triduum:

No public celebrations of the Paschal Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday) will take place. Efforts will be made to livestream and record these celebrations without a congregation from the Cathedral.

### Chrism Mass:

The Diocesan Chrism Mass has been rescheduled for Saturday, June 27, 2020, at 10:00am at the Cathedral.

### Stewardship:

Church members are encouraged to continue supporting their local parish financially since the parish must continue to pay bills during this period of the coronavirus outbreak. Donations can be brought to the parish, mailed, or submitted electronically. For those parishes who have not set up online giving, individuals can donate to their particular parish online on the diocesan website under the Giving Tab.

### The Poor:

The limitations of this difficult time will affect the poor and daily wage earners heavily. All should be creative in going out of their way to help others with their basic needs.

Here are some practical suggestions of helpful actions to consider:

- donating to the local food bank
- offering to pick up prescriptions or groceries for vulnerable or at-risk neighbors
- refraining from panic buying at the store, which contributes to shortages for all
- contributing to the bank of sick leave for fellow employees at work

Public Health:

All are asked to follow the guidance of public health officials.

Travel:

All are encouraged to limit unnecessary travel and to practice “social distancing” during this time.

Updates:

Other developments and subsequent instructions may come in the future since the present situation is quite fluid.

Attested by:



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Most Reverend Robert M. Coerver  
Bishop of Lubbock



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Mr. B. Marty Martin  
Chancellor