

Dear St. Francis and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parishioners,

Please know of my prayers for the parishes, our community and nation during this time. Below is some information and answers to potential questions to help address the limitations that we now face at the parishes and efforts to respond well to the circumstances. Also please remember public Masses are indefinitely suspended. Please consider watching mass on EWTN or the Shut-Ins Mass, or watching Mass on the internet.

1. Why suspend public Masses? Or why not just limit them to ten persons as an option?
 - a. The Archdiocese is trying to follow both the letter and spirit of the restrictions that are in place, to help support the effort to reduce the health impact.
2. Private Mass and Mass Intentions
 - a. Although public Masses are suspended, I will be offering mass each day, in private. A private Mass essentially means a Mass that I do when no one else is present. The circumstance may develop that a lector may be present and/or a person or two assisting with livestreaming or recording the Mass is present. I intend the location of my private Masses to start as follows:
 - i. Monday – rectory
 - ii. Tuesday – OLMC
 - iii. Wednesday – St. Francis
 - iv. Thursday – OLMC
 - v. Friday – St. Francis
 - vi. Saturday – OLMC
 - vii. Sunday – St. Francis.
 - b. Each Mass will be said for a parish requested Mass intention, as normally received at St. Francis and OLMC. Thus, Mass intentions will continue to be scheduled and offered. Each Sunday the Mass intention will be for the parishes. A pastor is required to say a Mass for the people of the parish each week, normally at a vigil or Sunday Mass. Thus, the Mass in our faith will continue to be a source of grace for the Church and for our local church.
3. Duration
 - a. How long will public Masses be suspended? The hope is it will be a matter of weeks but as things have progressed thus far with increasing restrictions it may likely be several weeks if not more.
4. Livestreaming Masses
 - a. This is something I would be interested in doing, especially for my Sunday Mass. Unfortunately, I do not have experience with this and would need assistance by someone that does. If you would like to assist, let me know. Recording may be an option too. I could use help with this.
5. Funerals
 - a. In the event of a death in the parish, the following are options:
 - i. A funeral Mass could occur, but only 10 people present.
 - ii. A burial only occurs, with a funeral Mass in the absence of the body or a memorial Mass celebrated at a later date.
6. Home Masses
 - a. Home masses are not allowed. The Archdiocese holds that these would be against the spirit of trying to stop the spread of the virus. Also, the Archdiocese notes these may cause division in parishes by showing preference to particular families over others.
7. Adoration Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
 - a. St. Francis and OLMC remain open as usual for people to stop in and pray.
 - b. Archdiocese indicates Exposition can take place over prolonged periods of a number of hours, so that groups do not congregate.
 - c. I do not plan to have Adoration but this may change as time goes.
8. Confession
 - a. Archdiocese indicates these should take place, but they should be scheduled in such a way that groups do not congregate.
 - b. I plan to have confessions available as follows:

- i. OLMC – Saturdays 5:00-5:30pm
 - ii. St. Francis – Sundays 9:00-9:30am
 - c. I may at some point incorporate drive-thru confession, where I take a position on the sidewalk next to the parking lot and someone could drive up in their car for confession.
- 9. Baptisms
 - a. Archdiocese notes these can take place, but they should be limited to no more than ten people in the church.
- 10. Visits to the Sick
 - a. I am able to offer the sacrament of the anointing of the sick to those that may need it.
- 11. EMHCs and Home Communion Services or Visiting the Homebound
 - a. EMHCs are not permitted to hold Communion Services, for others or for their own families. Visiting the homebound should also be suspended. Where possible, it is strongly encouraged that the homebound receive phone calls to reach out to them.
 - b. The Archdiocese recognizes the strong desire to receive the Eucharist, but in order to do our part to stop the spread, we are to encourage parishioners to break open the word, to pray as families, and to make spiritual communions.
- 12. Receiving Holy Communion
 - a. Archdiocese indicates it is not permitted to give communion on an individual basis or in other words “drive-thru” communion is not permitted.
- 13. Parish Events
 - a. Parish events that are gatherings of greater than ten people should be suspended.
- 14. Bulletin
 - a. I plan to have a bulletin each week, available for pick-up at the church on Saturdays by 11:00am and also on the parish website.
- 15. Facebook
 - a. I intend to use Facebook as a means of communication. Would be helpful if someone may be willing to assist me with this. Please let me know if willingly to do so.
- 16. Financial Considerations
 - a. Not having weekend masses could significantly impact parish collections. Given the economic uncertainty and the overall national and local environment we find ourselves, I understand if giving to the parish may need to be delayed for particular families/households. Parish finances are not my primary concern at this time.
 - b. For those that are able and wish to continue to give, you may drop off at the parish office or mail-in. Please know of my appreciation for doing so.
- 17. Office Hours
 - a. They will remain the same at St. Francis. Hours: Tues – Thurs 9:00am-Noon, 1:00pm-4:00pm, Friday 9:00-Noon, 1:00pm-3:00pm
 - b. I generally try to make myself available even if outside office hours. Please do not hesitate to contact me, no matter the time.
- 18. Potential Helps:
 - a. Word on Fire now has daily mass on-line: <https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass/>
 - b. Article from nun re tips when staying home: <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2020/03/im-a-nun-and-ive-been-social-distancing-for-29-years-here-are-tips-for-staying-home-amid-coronavirus-fears.html>
 - c. On making a spiritual communion: <https://aleteia.org/2018/09/20/cant-receive-the-eucharist-heres-how-to-make-a-spiritual-communion/>

Peace, Fr. Pat

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel pray for us!

St. Francis of Assisi pray for us!