



Diocese of Reno

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Office of the Bishop

April 1, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Yesterday President Trump and the White House Task Force reported on the data used for the decision to extend the COVID-19 federal guidelines through April 30, 2020. These measures form our national effort to stem the loss of lives, which could range from 100,000 to 240,000 even with full mitigation, and to prevent healthcare personnel and facilities from being overwhelmed, and to decrease the likelihood of a possible system collapse.

Today, Governor Sisolak issued a Stay at Home Directive, extending his previous directive on closures to April 30th as well. His new directive “strengthens the imperative that Nevadans must not leave their homes for nonessential activities in order to prevent the spread of COVID 19.” Today’s directive now aligns our state with the order in place for states that border ours. Among these contingent states, Nevada has the third largest number of COVID 19 cases to date.

In response to previous federal guidelines and state directives, I suspended all public Masses for the duration of these measures and authorized the closure of our Catholic schools, now until April 30th in compliance with the state’s extension. After prayerful consideration, I have decided, starting tomorrow, April 2, 2020, all churches and chapels will be closed in the Diocese of Reno. This means that churches will not be open for private prayer, Reconciliation, Adoration, or any gatherings whether inside or outside. There will be no celebration of Mass in private homes or the distribution of communion to small groups. We have to encourage people to stay at home. This order extends through April 30, 2020.

It is heartbreaking to watch on TV the extreme conditions under which doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals are working. They are putting their lives on the line. There are not enough of them, and many work without adequate equipment. A couple of weeks ago when I was at a grocery store early in the morning to avoid a crowd, a nurse came up to me pleading for prayers for healthcare personnel. I still can see the anxiety in her eyes. We have to pray for them, and we must help them by diligently following all the guidelines and directives in our state.

This is a painful and difficult decision to make. I know there will be people disappointed about my decision as they have been with my suspension of public Masses. But in conscience I firmly hold that I am morally compelled to take these measures. I make this decision out of the love of neighbor that Jesus Christ expects of us and our moral duty to safeguard human life, especially of the vulnerable, and to promote the common good. This decision also brings the Diocese of Reno in line with Las Vegas and California.

While public Masses are suspended, local parish Masses are being transmitted through various platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. I will be livestreaming the Paschal Triduum from St. Thomas Aquinas Cathedral. I invite you to join me or contact your parish to find out more about their Triduum plans. Though our doors may be closed, we are still here for you. Follow the Diocese of Reno on Facebook or at renodiocese.org.

Please take care of yourselves. Let’s pray for one another.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Randolph R. Calvo
Bishop of Reno