



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Hamilton in Bermuda

17th of March 2020

My dear and good People,

Given the directives of the Government of Bermuda and of Health Care professionals responding to COVID-19, the following will be implemented in the Diocese of Hamilton in Bermuda effective immediately:

SUNDAY MASSES

As Diocesan Bishop, I hereby dispense the faithful from the obligation to participate in the Sunday Mass (can. 87), until further notice.

I ask that each Pastor privately celebrate one Sunday Mass for the intentions of the people of his parish, as required by Canon Law (can. 534). The faithful in their homes are asked to be united in prayer.

WEEKDAY MASSES

Until further notice, all public celebrations of weekday Masses are suspended. All public devotions and other church services are cancelled.

INTENTIONS

Intentions that have already been ordered will be re-booked and celebrated at a later date.

CHURCHES

I have asked the Pastors to keep the churches open both on weekdays and on Sundays to allow those who want to find a quiet place for their spirit and soul.

The Cathedral of St. Theresa will be open daily (Monday – Friday) from 7:00am to 4:30pm and on Saturdays from 8:00am to 6:30pm.

On Sundays the Cathedral will be open from 7:45am to 12:45pm. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed on the main altar from 8:00am to 12:30pm.

FUNERALS

Funeral Masses are not permitted at this time. The Rite of Committal may be celebrated at the cemetery with immediate family members present. A Funeral Mass may be celebrated at a later date.

BAPTISMS

The Sacrament of Baptism may be celebrated privately with immediate family members present in a form of a Baptism without the Mass.

MARRIAGE

The Pre-Marriage Programme has been cancelled. For those couples currently enrolled in the programme, materials will be sent for online viewing in order to complete the course and receive a certificate.

PARISH MEETINGS

All parish gatherings and events are to be cancelled.

MINISTRY TO THE SICK AND THE ELDERLY

This ministry is to be exercised with prudence in order not to expose or bring any risk either to the sick/elderly or the minister.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Being aware that the homeless will be even more vulnerable during this time, I want to invite the Loaves and Fishes volunteers to possibly continue this important ministry. I however do not want them to feel forced to do it, but invite them to continue. The food is to be distributed only on a "take away" basis.

TIME FRAME

The current situation will be re-evaluated before Palm Sunday, the 5th of April, and then any further decisions will be made.

These decisions have been very difficult for me and have been made after great thought and much emotion.

I am conscious that these decisions are drastic and are going beyond what has been requested by the Government. However, I prefer that it be said that I have "exaggerated" the current situation than to be guilty of negligence that could cause damage to somebody's health or even life.

These are challenging and unusual times and they require unusual and unprecedented decisions. Let us work together for the care and safety of our diocesan island community.

Thank you for your attention to these directives.

Prayerfully

Bishop Wes Spiewak, C.R.

