



# Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence Office of Communications

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## **Directives from the Diocese of Providence in Response to the Coronavirus Crisis**

(PROVIDENCE, RI) – For the health, safety and well-being of our faith community, the Diocese of Providence has announced the following directives in response to the Coronavirus Crisis:

- Masses throughout the Diocese of Providence will continue to be offered at this time. However, in light of the serious health crisis caused by the coronavirus, the Diocesan Bishop hereby dispenses Catholics in the Diocese of Providence from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass beginning immediately and continuing through Sunday, March 29, 2020. Members of the faithful who are sixty-years of age or older, particularly those with underlying health conditions, are especially encouraged to take advantage of this dispensation.
- During this health crisis, pastors are permitted to adjust their liturgical and devotional schedules according to local conditions, while continuing to meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of the faithful, particularly regarding the celebration of funerals and weddings. To the extent possible, churches should remain open during the day for personal prayer, small group gatherings, devotions, and visits to the Blessed Sacrament.
- Regarding the celebration of major liturgical celebrations already scheduled, e.g. the Sacrament of Confirmation, pastors should confer with the Diocesan Office of Divine Worship.
- When gathering for liturgies and devotions, pastors and parishioners are urged to follow carefully the recommendations which have already been promulgated by the Diocesan Office of Divine Worship.
- In keeping with directives issued by the State of Rhode Island, pastors and school administrators should carefully evaluate the advisability of holding any social events scheduled in the parish or school, such as dinners, senior citizen gatherings, youth events, sporting events, fundraisers and field trips, always with the health and welfare of the participants foremost in mind.
- In keeping with recommendations issued by health officials in the State of Rhode Island, it may be necessary for Bishop Thomas Tobin and Bishop Robert Evans to limit their public schedules.

- All members of the Diocese of Providence are urged to pray fervently for all those affected by this health crisis – those who have been infected by the virus, their families, caregivers and health providers. Through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Providence, and of St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, may Almighty God grant healing, peace, comfort and strength to all.