

Holy Trinity Catholic Church

409 CHERRY STREET
COLUMBIA, PENNSYLVANIA 17512

MONDAY'S UPDATE TO FRIDAY'S UPDATE TO THURSDAY'S LETTER

March 16, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters of Holy Trinity,

This is about concerns in the current times of a bad flu season and the coronavirus.

UPDATE (from the diocese Office of Communications) - Today and effective immediately until further notice, Bishop Ronald W. Gainer, out of great concern for the health of the faithful and in union with the Bishops of Pennsylvania, has temporarily suspended all daily and weekend Masses in the Diocese of Harrisburg. Additionally, Bishop Gainer has suspended all public liturgies and devotions, and has asked that all churches and chapels be closed, including all perpetual adoration chapels.

Bishop Gainer made this decision after careful consideration of the recommendations from public health officials, and out of great concern for the health and well-being of the faithful, our clergy and parish staffs, given the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

“For Catholics, the Eucharist is the source and summit of our life in Christ, strengthening us to remain firm in our faith as we journey through this life. Making this difficult decision to temporarily suspend Masses and close our churches was not made lightly,” said Bishop Gainer. “Rather, this decision has been made after careful discussions and considerable reflection on the advice being provided from healthcare professionals. I deeply care for all those members of my flock. As chief shepherd, it is my duty to see to their spiritual health, and now in these challenging times, also to their physical welfare. I continue to pray for all those impacted by this virus, for our medical professionals caring for the ill and for all people facing these uncertain times. I also pray for the intercession of our Blessed Mother, Mary, health of the sick.”

A listing of live broadcasting and/or recordings of Masses from parishes throughout the Diocese is available on the Health Alerts page of the Diocesan website, www.hbgdiocese.org. Daily and Sunday Masses are also available from EWTN on Comcast channel 291 in the Harrisburg area, or online at <https://video.ewtn.com/daily-mass>.

Additional resources for parishes and the faithful will be available, also on the Diocesan website, in the coming days. These resources will include ways the faithful can continue to keep holy the Lord's Day.

Please visit the Health Alerts page of the Diocesan website, www.hbgdiocese.org, for the most up-to-date information regarding the Diocese's response to COVID-19, including a listing of Diocesan event cancelations and postponements, as well as additional COVID-19 prevention measures and recommendations.

The “Too long, didn’t read” version of that is that all parish churches in the diocese are closed. There will be no gatherings of the faithful until we get the all-clear from the bishop.

In the meantime, we are going to experiment with online broadcasting the Mass from the church. The instructions from the bishop allow for a few of the faithful to be present for the Mass if it is broadcast on the internet. So that’s what we’re going to try to do. It will be live-streamed and stored to watch on our parish Facebook page ([facebook.com/htparish/](https://www.facebook.com/htparish/)), starting 7:30 Tuesday, March 17 (Happy Saint Patrick’s Day!)

Magnificat (<https://us.magnificat.net/free>) is one of the many Catholic daily devotionals (like the “Word Among Us” that we provide), and has offered their resources for free during this period.

The sacrament of Reconciliation will not be available, except to those in danger of death.

The pastoral care for the sick and dying will continue, with some prudent precautions. If someone is in danger of death, please do not hesitate to contact the parish!

This is not a matter of government over-reach. This is the Shepherd of the Diocese, the Bishop, weighing heavily the difficult situation at hand, and discerning the course of prudence for the people under his spiritual care, given the best information available. In obedience, we follow his pastoral guidance, and we pray for him, and for all leaders in the midst of difficult decisions, for the life, safety, and welfare of all under their authority. May God bless them with a special outpouring of the virtues of judgment, prudence, wisdom, and good counsel.

Please keep the sick and vulnerable of our parish and local community in your prayers. Stay hydrated, take care of yourselves and others, be smart and safe, pray the rosary, and glorify the Lord. "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in health; I know that it is well with your soul." (3 John 2)

With prayers and blessings,

Fr. Stephen P. Kelley
Pastor, Holy Trinity Catholic Church