



# Diocese of Shreveport

Office of the Bishop

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Memo to: Clergy, Religious and the Faithful in the Diocese of Shreveport  
From: Bishop Francis I. Malone  
Date: March 13, 2020  
RE: **REVISED AND UPDATED RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS**

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Today, Friday, March 13, has brought new developments in the response of both the Governor of Louisiana, and from the Metropolitan Archbishop of New Orleans. Already today, I have issued a decree to pastors and principals of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Shreveport **that ALL Catholic schools will be closed immediately until April 13<sup>th</sup>**, though that is subject to change depending upon the circumstances present at that time. Related questions to this should be directed to our Superintendent of Schools, Sister Carol Shively, OSU, ([cshively@dioshpt.org](mailto:cshively@dioshpt.org)). This follows upon the Executive Decree of our Governor for the entire state of Louisiana.

Given the scope of this virus and its continued spread, the decree of the governor also applies to public gatherings of people in excess of 250. It has been made clear that this also applies to places of worship. Therefore, I am mandating the following in response to the COVID-19:

1. The Sunday obligation is dispensed, effective immediately. (While I recognize that you are receiving this notice late on Friday, it may not be possible to reach your entire congregation with this news until this weekend's Masses. However, please make use of your parish's website, and social media to get the word out. Churches may remain open during the day time so that members of the faithful who wish to make use of them for private adoration may do so.
2. NON-ESSENTIAL gatherings at parishes for the rest of March and April should be cancelled or postponed;
3. Communal penance services (where they have been scheduled) are to be suspended, as are face-to-face confessions, unless there is a physical barrier in place;

4. Holy Water font and baptisteries should be drained and dried until advised otherwise;
5. The status of the **Triduum will be updated** prior to the April 4-5 weekend.
6. For Palm Sunday, a simple prayer service may be held, after which people may pick up blessed palms, **which should be made available outside of the church.**
7. Our prayers of course, continue that this virus will be eradicated, and our hope is that things return to normal by the end of this period of time.
8. I strongly recommend that parishes that have scheduled fish frys should give serious consideration to either cancelling them, or offering only "take-out" options;
9. I also recommend that serious consideration be given to suspending the custom of the St. Joseph Altar and meals or socials associated with them.

Please be assured of my prayers for everyone as we make our way through this serious health crisis. May the Lord bless and protect you and your family members, our health care providers, and those who are on the front line of aid to those who are suffering at this time.