

Bishop DiMarzio has requested that the following be provided to all Pastors and Administrators for your information and for the benefit and safety of your parishioners. Please read it carefully and know that we are monitoring the situation closely and will present updates and clarifications as needed.

CHURCHES: NEW MANDATES!

- Because of the ongoing danger of groups gathering and the possibility of the virus spreading in this way, we are **MANDATING churches** to remain closed. **THIS IS EFFECTIVE AS OF MARCH 20, 2020 at NOON.**
- At this time, too, we are **MANDATING parish offices** to close for business in an attempt to keep people in their homes as much as possible for their own health and wellbeing. Most parish office business can be conducted by telephone. Those who can work from home should do so. **THIS IS EFFECTIVE AS OF MARCH 20, 2020 at NOON.**

PASTORAL CONCERNS

- Bishop DiMarzio has granted all the faithful of the Diocese of Brooklyn a dispensation from the law of abstinence for the Fridays of Lent for this year. This is being done to assist people who may have difficulties in shopping for food or other reasons which would make this practice difficult at this time. Please remind parishioners that the Fridays of Lent (and indeed all year) remain days of penance and prayer and that this is needed now more than ever.
 - Out of an abundance of caution especially the most vulnerable, **Funerals and weddings** will not be permitted in church. This is because limiting the funerals and weddings to 10 people is proving not to be feasible. If absolutely necessary, a graveside service, maintaining the recommendations of the CDC regarding social distancing, could be done, at the discretion of the cemetery administration. A memorial Mass for the deceased should be celebrated later. Weddings should be postponed.
 - We must also remind pastors and administrators of the precautions that should be taken when hearing confessions. These should be limited to **emergencies only** and while it is necessary for the confession to be one-on-one and in person, social distancing measures should be observed
- We also remind priests that spiritual counseling should be given over the phone only. In general we encourage priests to be in contact with their parishioners over the phone or by social media while respecting safe- environment protocols.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

- Catholic Charities is available for assistance, if needed. The Call Center number is 718-722-6001, Monday through Friday from 9 am to 6 pm. Information is available about food pantries and about mental health services. The mental health centers have the capacity to offer counseling over the phone.

SUNDAY OFFERINGS

Sunday offerings are a much needed financial support to our parishes, and are critical to their ongoing vitality and sustainability of their mission

We are always thankful for the continuing generosity of our parishioners, and during this difficult time we ask that you please continue to support your parish to the extent that you are able. Just as the mission and work of our parishes continues whether or not our buildings are open, so too does our need for your financial stewardship during this time.

To support your parish we encourage you to stay at home, and use the safety and security of this site to make your donation electronically through Give Central.

You may optionally make a one-time gift toward the COVID-19 Relief Fund. Proceeds from this special collection will be used to support those experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic.

You may also drop off or mail a check to your parish office.

We are all committed to serving the Faithful of the Diocese of Brooklyn during this difficult time. Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, pray for us!