

Holy Trinity Catholic Church

409 CHERRY STREET
COLUMBIA, PENNSYLVANIA 17512

UPDATE FROM YESTERDAY'S LETTER

March 13, 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, in union with the Bishops of Pennsylvania, has dispensed the faithful of the Diocese of Harrisburg from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.

Despite the suspension of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, all regularly scheduled masses will remain open to the public for those who wish to attend.

Bishop Gainer made this move out of great concern for the health and well-being of the faithful, their families, our clergy and parish staff, given the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Those still wishing to attend Mass are welcome, but are asked to be careful in their contact with others. The Diocese advises those who are currently ill, the elderly and those with a compromised immune system to remain at home.

Please visit the Diocesan website, www.hbgdiocese.org, for a listing of Diocesan event cancelations and postponements, as well as additional COVID-19 prevention measures and recommendations from the Diocese.

Scheduled Masses: All Masses will be offered at their usual times:

- Weekend Masses Saturday evening at 5:00 p.m. and Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
- Daily Masses Monday-Friday at 7:30 a.m., and Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m.

Please do not use this as an excuse to simply “skip” Mass and neglect your spiritual needs. You are *encouraged* to attend Mass, unless you or a family member have a compromised health condition. Throughout the centuries, the routine of assembling for the celebration of the mysteries of our faith have brought consolation and encouragement in difficult times such as this.

As I said in yesterday’s letter, if you determine that your situation dictates your absence from the celebration of the Mass, please make some other comparable spiritual sacrifice, such as watching the Mass on television or the internet, and/or meditating on the readings and Catholic reflections on them.

School Masses: There will no Masses with the school until further notice. Friday morning Masses will be at 7:30 a.m.

Stations of the Cross: There will be no 2:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross until further notice. Stations will continue to be prayed at 7:00 p.m.

Penance Service: The Lenten penance service on Palm Sunday at 7 p.m. is still on, until further notice.

Nursing Home Masses/Communion: Access will depend upon each institution. Ministers of Holy Communion should contact institutions before assuming that they will be allowed to enter.

Parish gatherings: The diocese has given the pastors the discretion to reschedule or cancel non-essential social gatherings, parish meetings and other non-sacramental functions.

- Fastnachts will be baked and sold this week, but the final week is cancelled. Arrangements are being made concerning the fastnachts sold for the last week. Anyone able to volunteer, please help.
- The parish scheduled meetings will be held at the discretion of the leaders of the meetings. Leaders may decide to exchange information by email, phone, or some other option, rather than a meeting.
- The Legion of Mary Acies (renewal of legionary promises) for March 21 is cancelled.
- Sunday morning Religious Education classes are cancelled.
- RCIA classes are cancelled. Information will be emailed.
- The diocesan Men's Conference at Bishop McDevitt HS has been cancelled. Please see the diocesan website (hbgdiocese.org) for other cancellations of diocesan events.

Further emails will be sent out as conditions and available information change.

For all these events, again, please make your own decision as to your personal situation. If you are sick, please do not make others sick. If you (or someone you live with) are at risk, please be cautious of what you expose yourself to and bring home.

With many opting to stay home from Mass, please continue to fill your collection envelopes and bring them (or send them) to the church or parish office when you can. Please also consider using the *Online Parish Giving* option on the parish webpage. The parish needs to continue meeting our financial obligations.

And 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