



Roman Catholic
Diocese of Tucson
Office of the Bishop

1st of July 2020

From: +Edward J. Weisenburger Bishop of Tucson

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I wish to inform you that after a careful review of the medical situation, and hearing the recent concerns of our Governor and civic leaders on television, I have been advised by Diocesan leadership to suspend public worship. I agree with their recommendation and the suspension of public worship is effective as of today, July 1, 2020. This returns us temporarily to those protocols we were following just prior to the reopening of our parishes. You should anticipate a suspension of approximately four weeks but the matter will be reviewed daily and the suspension could be for a shorter or longer duration.

Those who follow national news are aware that the State of Arizona has been referenced across the nation for our substantial spike in Covid-19 cases. When the pandemic began I stressed that a primary factor on reopening would be the ability of our hospitals and medical personnel to respond adequately to the sick. Members of the medical community—who daily place themselves at great risk to serve us—are now telling us that we are at a crisis point. I believe that we owe it these noble men and women to do our part in bringing the pandemic under control.

For now let us be committed to journeying in solidarity with the sick, the suffering, the unemployed, the frightened, and the healthcare workers who must daily face this pandemic without flinching. Join with your local parish for televised or internet Masses, or log onto the Diocese of Tucson web page and join me for daily Mass. The protocols we instituted for our parishes at the time of our reopening were sensible, thorough, and implemented with care and sensitivity. When we are able to open up once again these protocols will be reinstated. But for now, where it is safe, pastors will arrange for an outdoor distribution of Holy Communion after members of the faithful have observed a Mass via technology. Confessions will be heard only out-of-doors. The only public Masses will be funerals and weddings, and with a limit of ten persons in the congregation.

I wish to express my deep gratitude for the clergy and parish ministers who have responded so very well throughout the pandemic. They are extraordinary men and women and their fidelity to you and intense desire to be of service is a witness to the grace of their vocation.

Let us pray that this suspension is brief and that we can soon be in one another's company. Let us also be unified in our resolve to lead the way in battling this pandemic. The witness and example of our lives and the intensity of our prayers will surely help to heal the world.

May God bless you abundantly,

+Edward J. Weisenburger
Bishop of Tucson