

**SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM FR. MATTHEW O'TOOLE
PASTOR, ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND**

In an official letter from Archbishop Robert Carlson to all priests and deacons dated 16 March 2020, he writes:

“In order to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community, I am mandating the suspension of all public Masses in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, beginning with Masses following this communication today, March 16, 2020. Pending updates and guidance from local and state government and health officials, we have preliminary plans to resume Masses beginning April 6; however, we will re-evaluate at a later date.

“As with my directive on March 15 to close schools, this decision has not been made lightly. However, caring for both our physical and spiritual health go hand-in-hand, and the health, safety and overall well-being of the people of the archdiocese is my first priority.”

In conjunction with the Archbishop's further directives, I share these points that apply to the Archdiocese and some that have been re-worded for the particularity of St. Margaret of Scotland. They are to be implemented immediately and maintained through April 5, 2020, pending further updates:

- All public celebrations of the liturgy, as well as Liturgy of the Hours, Stations of the Cross, and all other group services, Bible studies and activities are to cease beginning immediately. The Archbishop's dispensation for all Catholics in our Archdiocese from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is now extended through April 5.
- Because the number of people paying visits to the Blessed Sacrament cannot be controlled and social distancing inside our chapel cannot be ensured, the Thursday practice of Eucharistic Adoration will be suspended until further notice.
- Holy Communion may still be distributed outside of Mass at times determined by the pastor. All ministers, ordinary and extraordinary, delivering Holy Communion to the elderly, sick or homebound need to be in good health.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation remains available to those wishing to make a Confession. Please call to arrange an appointment. Likewise, the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick for those who are seriously ill or in danger of death.
- All parish organizations are asked to suspend or cancel events that would assemble 50 people or more in one place and at one time.
- The practice of tithing to the church remains essential to the continued operation of our parishes and their missions. Please consider making your contribution through online giving, or by drop-off or mail to the rectory office.
- The Archdiocese of St. Louis understands the economic impact that this emergency is having on so many individuals in our parishes, as well as on our community as a whole. However, in times like this, it is even more urgent for us to assist our brothers and sisters who are in the most need. We encourage you to consider supporting organizations that are responding to this crisis, such as Catholic Charities of St. Louis, The Society of St. Vincent de Paul of St. Louis, and the Annual Catholic Appeal.
- Be alert to the needs of shut-in's, the elderly, and those whose health is seriously compromised. If you are aware of any parishioner in need of assistance getting groceries,

prescriptions refilled or similar needs, please contact the parish office, and we will work to organize volunteers to provide them help.

Thank you for your attention to these special arrangements. Your patience is an added exercise in the sacrifices we are making during this penitential season of Lent. Again, let us to continue to pray through the Virgin Mary for the health of the sick, the strength of caregivers, and the success of those seeking to develop a vaccine for the coronavirus.

Our Lady of Guadalupe – *pray for us!*