



ST. PETER
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Peter,

The Most Reverend David Talley, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Memphis, suspended the public celebration of the Mass throughout the diocese until further notice. **He also dispensed all Catholics in and of the diocese from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.** He did not make this decision lightly or without counsel. Among the many experts in healthcare, other bishops in Tennessee, and other religious leaders in our region, I also offered my views as a pastor and priest in the Memphis community. I stand with Bishop David in this decision and during this difficult time.

I cannot express how sad I am that this likely is the first time in 180 years that we have kept our doors closed on Sundays. However, in this age of technology, we do not have to be silent. The Dominican Friars will continue to celebrate Daily and Weekend Masses Monday-Friday at 12:05pm, and Sunday at 8:30am. **Although they will be closed to public participation,** these Masses will be live-streamed AND recorded for later access through our [website](#) and on [Facebook](#). In this way, our people can still receive the Word, preaching, and have Mass celebrated for your intentions. I personally will be praying for you all at each Mass.

Restrictions on public gatherings makes it necessary to **cancel Stations of the Cross this Wednesday (3/18) and next (3/25)**. We will be in contact with you regarding Holy Week and other parish activities.

I understand and appreciate the deep desire of our Catholic family to participate at Mass and receive Holy Communion. In the absence of its regular reception, the grace of the Mass offered for you and your intentions (my chief exercise in the coming days) will ensure that we as the Body of Christ receive God's grace to persevere in this crisis.

Unless some very radical restrictions are placed on movement around the city, the Dominican Friars are available to offer Sacraments to the sick and fulfill other pastoral needs that require visits to parishioners directly. However, we cannot make casual visits. Nor can we make essential visits without great care.

The Faithful have the right to Anointing of the Sick when **you truly need it** and freely request it. The Friars who visit the sick will take every precaution to limit our movement between those may have Coronavirus and those suffering from other life-threatening illnesses.

Many of us are experiencing great uncertainty, fear, and a desire to do something to end this crisis. Please join me in praying for those directly involved in eliminating this pandemic and those suffering its effects. Let us pray also for Bishop David, all religious leaders, and our healthcare community, who shepherd us through this difficult time.

Lastly, let us continue pray for each other. Our St. Peter family has always been a solid Dominican community rooted in the faith of Jesus Christ. We continue celebrating that heritage, especially in the face of such profound trials as the Coronavirus. Together in Christ, our faith will see us through this travail.

Your Brother in Christ,
Fr. Auggie, O.P.