

you're invited { *sundays 4pm* } *8300 kanis road*



cornerstone
LEARN | LOVE | LIVE | LEAD

Dear Cornerstone,

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

The continuing spread of COVID-19, the new coronavirus, has captured the attention and concerns of many. Given the present climate, I feel compelled to offer these encouragements.

1. TRUST IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE

In the midst of uncertainty, we have an opportunity to put our theology into practice. God is sovereign over all things—whether they are as big as the planets or as small as a virus. He is the Lord, "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). We offer a quiet witness to our faith when we resist panic, knowing that our times and our health have been, and always will be, in the Lord's hands (Psalm 31:15).

2. BE PRUDENT

The Internet abounds with coronavirus information, some of it encouraging panic or complacency. I encourage you to avoid those kinds of sources. Instead, consult health advisories from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Arkansas Department of Health.

- The CDC website provides [lots of information](#) about the virus and appropriate steps for individuals, churches, schools, and businesses to take. If you're interested, you can subscribe to the CDC's COVID-19 newsletter to get regular updates. Go to their newsletter subscription page and choose the newsletter entitled, "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)."
- The Arkansas Department of Health offers similar [resources](#), including up-to-date statistics on the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Arkansas. As of today (3/11), one case of coronavirus has appeared in Arkansas—a person in Pine Bluff who is "presumed" to have the virus and is currently in isolation. The Department lists the number of people who have been tested for COVID-19 or are being monitored.

Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, for a minimum of 20 seconds using soap and warm water. There's no substitute for this. While alcohol-based hand sanitizers can kill bacteria, it is unclear whether they're adequate against COVID-19 or other viruses. For cleaning surfaces, such as doorknobs, telephones, countertops, etc., the CDC recommends using a product containing bleach.

If you've had a cough or fever within the last 24 hours, please stay at home. If you are returning from known areas of higher prevalence of COVID-19, we encourage you not to attend church for two weeks. The list of affected areas and the period of self-quarantine will likely change in the weeks ahead.

Prudence and care for others, especially for those who are susceptible to this and other viral illnesses, may lead to *temporary* changes regarding our worship service. We'll consider and communicate any necessary changes after prayer and consultation with physicians, scientists, and in compliance with any governmental directives.

3. STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Difficult times can refine our faith and strengthen our relationships. The Lord has placed many groups of people under our care: starting with our immediate family, extending to our relatives, to our church community, and then to others outside the church. As a church community, and as small groups, let's look for ways we can support each other within our span of care. That may involve call trees to daily check in on those who might be in isolation and potentially helping with groceries or medications as well as other ideas.

4. PRAY

And pray:

- for those suffering from the new coronavirus;
- for medical personnel and caregivers;
- for wisdom for government leaders;
- for peace from fear or anxiety; and
- for the Church's continued witness and ministry.

Grace and peace,

Ryan

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To the People of the Diocese of Little Rock:

As your bishop, I have an obligation to do what we can to minimize the spread of COVID-19, especially to the most vulnerable among us.

In response to COVID-19, the Diocese of Little Rock is trying to be pro-active rather than reactive. Accordingly, certain measures must be put in place in an effort to “flatten the curve” such that the spike in COVID-19 cases is not too high, too fast, such that our healthcare providers are overwhelmed. While COVID-19 is unlikely to be serious for most people, we have an obligation to care for the very young, the aged, and those with compromised immune systems. And the best way we can care for them is minimizing large group gatherings for the time being. Taking into account that large gatherings are a factor in the spread of the disease; that there is a long lead time before symptoms present themselves and infection is known; that (God forbid) priests, deacons, and lay ministers could unknowingly transmit the disease to others, or congregants to one another; and that we have to draw on our faith and spiritual resources to face this threat; I hereby promulgate the following:

1. The Sunday Mass obligation is dispensed for all Catholics effective immediately. Public Masses shall be suspended starting the weekend of March 21-22, except for small groups at the discretion of the priest. Whenever possible Churches will be kept open during daylight hours for private prayer and Eucharistic Adoration as an alternative to Sunday Mass.
2. All non-essential gatherings at Parishes for the rest of March and April are cancelled or postponed, pending further notice. This includes but is not limited to previously-scheduled Confirmation ceremonies.
3. All communal penance services are cancelled. Face-to-face confessions are suspended, and confessions may only be heard with a physical screen/barrier.
4. All Holy Water fonts shall be drained and dried until further notice.
5. Except for very small parishes, only those entering the Church through RCIA may be present physically for the Triduum. All others may participate in Triduum services via TV or electronic media.
6. On Palm Sunday, priests will hold a short private service, after which people may pick up blessed palms, which will be made available outside of church.
7. By April 15, I will make a determination regarding extending any of the above through the month of May. As we continue to battle this public health crisis as a Church and as a country, let us not lose sight of the fact that for us Christians, our ultimate peace and hope rests in Jesus Christ. Through the hard work of our dedicated health professionals, and with our cooperation and our faith in Jesus Christ, we will make it through the trying times that are sure to come over the weeks and months to come. Although these measures may seem drastic, our faith also binds us together in ways that run deeper than our public gatherings.

Let us continue to pray for one another, and know of my fervent prayers for all of you during these times. Given at the Chancery Office, Diocese of Little Rock, this 12th day of March, 2020.

Sincerely in Christ,
+Anthony B. Taylor
Bishop of Little Rock



DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

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1º de marzo, 2020

Al pueblo de la Diócesis de Little Rock:

Como todos sabemos, el coronavirus parece estar convirtiéndose en una amenaza mundial para el cual no hay vacuna o cura disponible. Además, ya que al parecer permanece en el cuerpo por mucho tiempo antes de que los síntomas aparezcan, será muy difícil prevenir que se disperse. Como siempre, las personas que se sientan enfermas no deben ir a la Misa. Lo siguiente puede ser útil y por lo tanto les pido implementar estas modificaciones temporales en nuestra diócesis lo antes posible.

- Recepción de la Eucaristía durante la Misa en la mano en lugar que en la lengua, excepto en la Misa en Latín para quienes la recepción en la mano no es una opción.
- Descontinuar temporalmente la distribución de la Preciosísima Sangre durante la Misa.
- No tomarse de las manos durante la oración del Padrenuestro.
- Inclinar la cabeza como Saludo de Paz en lugar de un apretón de mano.

Oremos por todos aquellos que ya han sido afectados por este virus, especialmente por aquellos con un sistema inmunológico comprometido y que corren mayor riesgo.

Sinceramente en Cristo,

+Anthony B. Taylor
Obispo de Little Rock



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

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March 1, 2020

To the people of the Diocese of Little Rock,

As we all know, the corona virus seems to be becoming a world-wide threat for which there is no vaccination or cure available. Moreover, since it seems that it is present in the body for a long time before symptoms appear, it will be very difficult to prevent its spread. As always, persons who feel ill should not come to Mass. The following may be helpful and so I am asking for these temporary modifications to be implemented in our diocese as soon as possible:

- Reception of Eucharist at Mass in the hand rather than on the tongue except in the Latin Masses for whom reception on the hand is not an option.
- Temporarily discontinuing the distribution of the Precious Blood at Mass.
- Forgoing the holding of hands at the Lord's Prayer.
- A bow for the Sign of Peace in place of handshaking.

Let us pray for all of those who are already affected by this virus, especially for those with compromised immune systems who are most at risk.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Anthony B. Taylor
Bishop of Little Rock