

Churches, church property on lockdown

Governor JB Pritzker has issued a mandatory shelter-in-place order for the state of Illinois. What this means for parishes in the state is that, effective 5 p.m. Saturday, March 21 through Tuesday, April 7:

- All churches and adoration chapels must be closed and locked until the governor lifts the order. Private prayer in any parish building or on the property must be discontinued until the order is lifted.
- There can be no live Stations of the Cross or any other gatherings anywhere on parish or church school property, nor can any parish personnel be involved in organizing such activities at any other site.
- Funerals and wakes must be postponed until the order is lifted.
- All weddings and baptisms must be postponed. They can be re-scheduled only once the order is lifted. There are no exceptions to this, regardless of the size of the group.

In light of this order, Cardinal Cupich has called for common prayers to be said five times each day that can be announced by the ringing of church bells or the setting of alarms in private homes. The short prayers for each of these times are dedicated to a specific group that is particularly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Times and the prayers all of us can say are as follows:

- ◆ 9 a.m. Prayer for those infected with the virus and all those who are ill: "Lord, place your healing hand on those who suffer illness. Bring them to full health and ease their anxious hearts. May our prayer and the intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary encourage them that they are not alone. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."
- ◆ Noon Prayer for health care workers and those attending the sick: "Lord, we are ennobled by those who put their lives at risk in caring for the sick. Keep them safe and embolden them when they are weary. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."
- ◆ 3 p.m. Prayer for first responders and essential workers: "Lord, we pray for those who run to danger to keep us safe and those who serve the common good. Embrace them with your mantle of protection and comfort the fears of their families. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."
- ◆ 6 p.m. Prayer for people of every nation and their leaders: "Lord, the pandemic opens our eyes to see each other as brothers and sisters in one human family. We pray for people of every nation and their leaders, asking that they be inspired to seek the good of all and quell the voices of division. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."
- ◆ 9 p.m. Prayer for those who have died today: "Lord, we grieve the passing of our sisters and brothers who have died this day. We commend them to your tender mercy, confident that nothing, not even death, will separate us from your love. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."

The cardinal stated, " I am motivated to offer this additional means of uniting our people in prayer aware of the feeling of isolation they feel in not being together in the Eucharist and out of concern for their suffering."

Cardinal Cupich will be celebrating Mass that will be livestreamed via the archdiocese of Chicago's website during this time. Mass on Sunday, March 22, will be broadcast at 9:30 a.m. on ABC7 Chicago television. For broadcast and livestreaming of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 9; The Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, April 10; and The Easter Vigil beginning the evening of April 11, see the Archdiocese's website. It is anticipated these liturgies will be livestreamed as well.