

STEP THREE – WITH MODIFICATIONS – EFFECTIVE 3/17/20 – REVISED – SEE HIGHLIGHTED TEXT

On Saturday, March 14, Governor Reynolds announced new mitigation measures to help curb the spread of COVID-19 within Iowa. The social distancing interventions being called for are consonant with STEP THREE in our policy. At the same time, we are well aware that the time to act is now if we are to have a significant impact on how fast the virus spreads in our communities. Therefore, we will be going beyond what is called for in our STEP THREE.

We do not take these steps lightly, especially the cancellation of almost all public worship within the diocese. The sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, lie at the heart of who we are as Catholics. But the common good calls us to make this sacrifice. It is clear from accounts from around the world that urgent action is needed if we are to avoid overwhelming our health care system. Our prayer is that this form of Lenten fasting will put us in deeper solidarity with those going with so much less, with those who will be—and are being—severely affected by this outbreak.

It is impossible to foresee how long these restrictions will be in place. The CDC recently recommended that large group gatherings be suspended for at least the next eight weeks. The restriction of gatherings to 10 persons is expected to last 15 days; we will notify the diocese when this changes.

This is a list of the key changes being made to church life, until further notice. The details of the policy are included below:

- **All public celebrations of the Mass (and all other public liturgies or devotions) are to be cancelled.**
 - Baptisms, weddings, and funerals may be celebrated with immediate family members only.
 - Individual Confession and Anointing of the Sick may be celebrated.
- **All Catholics in the Diocese of Davenport are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.**
- If you are sick, or if you are caring for someone who is sick, please stay home.
 - Those who are 60 years of age or older, and those with underlying health conditions, should stay at home and avoid all gatherings or other situations of potential exposure.
- All large group meetings, conferences, retreats and the like in the diocese are to be cancelled.
- All faith formation classes and activities are to be cancelled (use electronic formats if possible).
- Small office meetings may take place if essential, but it is preferable to meet electronically.
 - Encourage staff, especially those at risk for severe illness, to telework (when feasible).
 - Limit non-essential work travel.
- All Catholic schools will be closed, at least until April 13. All extracurricular events are to be cancelled.
 - Further guidance will be forthcoming from the Office of the Superintendent.