Guidelines for Particular Celebrations

Mass

1. Reminder: the faithful have been dispensed from the obligation to participate in Sunday Mass until further notice.

2. Beginning Wednesday, March 18, public celebrations of the Mass are suspended in the Diocese of Stockton, until further notice.
   - If possible, parishes are encouraged to find ways of streaming or broadcasting a Sunday liturgy. The departments of Liturgy & Worship and IT of the Pastoral Center stand ready to assist parishes.
   - Priests are obligated to celebrate Mass privately, with an individual present to respond if possible.

3. Churches are to remain open for private prayer.
   - Small chapels are not to be open to the public.
   - Eucharistic Exposition is a public liturgical rite, with certain requirements for its celebration. If these requirements cannot be followed, out of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, Exposition should not occur.
     - The prescriptions in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* Chapter III must be followed, but not to include Benediction at this time.
     - There must be sufficient faithful present to adore and keep watch over the Blessed Sacrament without becoming too large of a gathering.
     - A properly trained individual must be present on site, and available, to repose the Sacrament.
     - When Exposition ends, the Blessed Sacrament is simply reposed.
   - Reminder: Exposition is not necessary in order for the faithful to adore the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, for Christ is present in the tabernacle in every Church, visible or not.

4. Our people must know that even with public Masses suspended, our concern and obligation for their spiritual care continues.
   - Parishes should take steps to make sure that those parishioners who may be socially isolated, especially the elderly, in some way experience the care of the Church. Parish ministers and volunteers, for instance, might give them a phone call and offer to pray with them and find out if there is anything that they need (groceries, etc.).
   - Parishes should be especially concerned for the spiritual care of those parishioners who do not have access to the spiritual resources available on the internet.

5. A separate notification will be sent out regarding the Chrism Mass and how the parishes will receive the Holy Oils. Chrism Mass will not be celebrated in a public manner.

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6. Information regarding the celebration of the Triduum and Easter will be forthcoming.

**Funerals**

7. Funeral Vigils are suspended.
   - If desired, some prayers from the Vigil and/or devotions such as the Rosary might be recited for a time before the Funeral liturgy.

8. Funeral Masses are to be held privately and kept to immediate family, taking into account directives from public health authorities.
   - A Memorial Mass may be planned for a later date after the crisis has passed.
   - Funeral Masses- follow the current liturgical adaptations.
   - Option- Funeral Liturgy outside Mass, or even celebrating only the Final Commendation and Committal service, with the Mass to occur at a later date.

9. No visitations.

10. No receptions are to be held on parish property, due to the guidelines of national, state, and local public health officials.

**Matrimony**

11. The Sacrament of Matrimony may be celebrated with immediate family.

12. There is the possibility of celebrating Marriage outside of Mass.

13. No receptions are to be held on parish property, due to the guidelines of national, state, and local public health officials.

14. Marriage is to be celebrated according to the liturgical adaptations already in force.
   - In addition, optional elements (especially those not present in the liturgical books) are to be omitted, keeping the ceremony brief.

**Baptisms**

15. Infant baptisms may be celebrated privately with immediate family, keeping the number of those present in line with the current guidelines from public health authorities. No group baptisms at this time.
16. Baptisms should be celebrated in an open space.

Penance

17. Opportunities for individual confession should be offered, with proper distance/separation between the priest and penitent. It should be offered with enough frequency that large numbers of the faithful are not present at once.
   - If confessionals are used, the following must be observed:
     - Hand sanitizer dispensers/wipes must be available outside the door.
     - Confession face to face is not to occur in a small space. A sign should be posted notifying the faithful not to use that door.
   - Considering the numbers of the faithful who may want to avail themselves of the sacrament during this time, confessors are reminded that the celebration of the sacrament is not a counseling session, and that, in charity towards others, individual confessions should be kept short.
   - While waiting in line the faithful should abide to proper social distancing.

18. Outside of imminent danger of death, it belongs to the diocesan bishop to judge whether general absolution may be administered. In the judgment of the bishop:
   - General absolution may be given if there is a large number of people waiting for confession and which might violate public health directives.
   - General absolution is to follow Chapter III of the Rite of Penance, using the short rite (no. 64) with instruction, giving of penance, general confession and the standard form of absolution.
   - The faithful are to be instructed that in order to receive general absolution they must truly repent of their sins with a firm purpose of amendment, make up for any scandal or harm caused, and resolve to confess individually at another time all serious sins which cannot be confessed at this time (no. 60).

Blessings and Popular Devotions

19. Public celebrations of blessings, such as quinceañeras, should be postponed.

20. We encourage popular devotions to be celebrated at home with the family.
   - Parishes might consider streaming Stations of the Cross, the Liturgy of the Hours, or similar online.
21. Information regarding the initiation of those in the RCIA will be sent out in a separate notice.

22. A decree will be sent out dispensing all the adult Elect from the requirement of undergoing all three scrutinies. If they have not already gone through one of the scrutinies, it may be celebrated at a convenient time before initiation, even immediately before baptism.

This is a time when many are worried and concerned. Let us be a people who, while using the gifts of prudence and reason that God has given us, place our trust in the Lord Jesus. This is a crisis, but it is also an opportunity to grow in grace and holiness.