

Masses Will Be Streamed: Bishop Says for Now, No Public Masses to be Held, Only Private With Priests Only

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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SPRINGFIELD - Bishop Thomas John Paprocki made an announcement Wednesday morning that at present, there will be no public Masses, only private Masses held by priests with no congregation present.

“As dioceses around the country are canceling public masses in order to help stem the spread of the coronavirus, in our Diocese, I am encouraging us to embrace this moment as a spiritual fast, as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI described,” Paprocki said.

“During this period of fasting from the Eucharistic, we will refrain from any public celebration of the Mass or any public service, in which the Blessed Sacrament is distributed. Also, during this time, I ask the priests of our diocese to celebrate the mass 'sine populo,' that is, without a congregation, privately in their churches, during hours when the churches are closed.

“This includes all weekdays and Sundays, effective March 18, 2020, continuing through the Easter Vigil and ongoing until further notice. Masses celebrated by priests at the Cathedral will be streamed live via the diocesan Facebook page, and I encourage all the faithful to watch one of these masses or one of the many other live masses on EWTN, Word on Fire with Bishop Barron, and other outlets. In place of receiving the Blessed Sacrament, I encourage the faithful to make a spiritual communion.”

Bishop Paprocki said the current circumstances surrounding the novel coronavirus are truly remarkable and unprecedented, certainly in our lifetime.

“As Christians, we have concern for the physical health of our families, friends, and neighbors, and we also have concerns and obligations to pray and fast on behalf of all of those impacted by this pandemic,” he said. “The virus appears to present a serious health risk to those who happen to be among the most vulnerable—the elderly and those with compromised immune systems. Our Lord Jesus Christ called us to a particular concern for such brothers and sisters, when he said: 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:40).”

The bishop continued: “It is specifically with those most vulnerable among us in mind that I am calling for a great sacrifice in our diocese. In addition to changes announced to date, I am asking our entire diocesan community to engage together in a fast from the Eucharistic for the sake of the physical and spiritual healing of all those in our diocese, nation, and world.”

The bishop closed by saying: “I ask our local churches to embrace this spiritual sacrifice together, with the intention of an end to the spread of the coronavirus, for the healing of those afflicted by it, and for strength for those who are providing care for the afflicted. I also pray that this Eucharistic fast will draw us closer to our Lord and cultivate a hunger and new appreciation for the Blessed Sacrament.”