



St. Michael Catholic Church

Rev. Rick Hobbs

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March 13, 2020

Dear Parish Family,

I invite you to read the following changes Bishop Taylor has mandated throughout the Diocese of Little Rock. After listing his changes, I will mention a few items relevant to St. Michael Catholic Church specifically.

1. Effectively immediately. Sunday Mass obligation is dispensed for all Catholics.

Hence, beginning immediately Catholics are not required to attend Sunday Mass through the end of April. Nonetheless, we will have regularly scheduled Masses this weekend (March 14-15) so I can address this unprecedented protocol with our parish family. You are not obligated to attend Masses this weekend, and anyone who is elderly or has health issues or a compromised immune system should stay home. Still, perhaps now more than ever we need the strength, comfort and grace of the Eucharist.

2. Churches will be kept open for private prayer and Eucharist Adoration during daylight hours as an alternative to Sunday Mass.

At St. Michael's we will keep the Church doors open during church office hours, as well on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. We will continue to do the same; we will, however, cancel daily Masses (English and Spanish) beginning Monday, March 16. Hence, no Mass on Monday, March 16.

3. All non-essential gatherings at parishes are canceled or postponed for the rest of March and April pending further notice.

This means that beginning Friday, March 13, we will cancel the evening Stations of the Cross, as well as the Lenten meal afterwards for the remaining Fridays of Lent. Additionally, we will cancel religious education classes, Adult P.R.E., bible studies, youth groups, retreats, food/bake sales, etc. at least through the end of April. Basically, **no group** meetings until the end of April. Please stay tuned for further developments on First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation.

4. Face-to-face confessions are suspended and confessions may only be heard with a physical screen/barrier.

The priest will be available at this scheduled times to hear your confessions (*Mon. 7 a.m. - 8 a.m., Wed., 7 a.m. - 8 a.m., & 5 p.m. - 6 p.m., Thur., 12 p.m. - 1 p.m., Fri., 7 a.m. - 8 a.m., Sat., 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.*) in the Parish Hall cry room.

5. Only those entering the Church through RCIA/RCIY may be physically present for the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil).

After consultation with the RCIA/RCIY staff, at St. Michael's we will determine whether to bring the RCIA/RCIY candidates into full Communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil or at another fitting feast, such as possibly Pentecost (May 31), so their family and friends can attend. Please stay tuned for further developments.

6. **On Palm Sunday, the priest will hold a short private service, after which blessed palms will be available for the public to pick up outside the church.** Early on Palm Sunday, we will celebrate a short private Palm Sunday service. Afterwards, around 8 a.m., we will make the blessed palms available outside the north entry of the church. We invite you to watch the Palm Sunday Mass on television. Maybe you can catch Pope Francis on television.
7. **The parish priest stand ready to respond to your calls for anointing of the sick.** Please call the parish office (479-471-1211) during regular office hours, or after office hours, use the emergency protocol by following the prompts after calling the office. We will not have communal anointings or communal penance services at least until the end of April because of the inherent threat of contagion in large crowds.
8. **Church offices will continue to operate during our scheduled business hours.** If you are sick with a contagious illness, please do not come to the church office, but try to conduct your business over the phone. We will do our best to honor all scheduled appointments
9. **In the case of a funeral, the priest will meet with the family and have a private funeral Mass for the deceased.** Funeral Masses will not be open to the public to attend. Nevertheless, we highly encourage you to pray for those who have died by praying the rosary and visiting their graves.
10. **The priest will continue to offer private Masses.** We will take care to celebrate Masses for those Mass intentions people have specifically requested.
11. **Please be mindful of your financial contributions to the church.** If at all possible, please do not neglect contributing financially to the church during these troubled times, such as online by We Share, automatic bank draft, by mail or personally delivering them to the office. Our parish cannot operate efficiently without your generous contributions.

God bless!

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