

Dear St. Francis Xavier Parish Community,

Information and response to the spread of COVID-19 (the current coronavirus) continues to change rapidly. We are grateful that this virus has not had a significant impact in our community to date but realize we must act in a proactive way to protect our community and the communities beyond. As much as we cherish our Sunday worship and other gatherings, we are making the sacrifice to limit our time together for the sake of public health.

We are adhering closely to guidelines from The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois Governor's Office, and the Archdiocese of Chicago. You can find the recent statement from the Archdiocese [here](#).

Therefore, we are implementing the following until further notice:

- Effective March 14 at noon, we are closing our entire campus until further notice. All liturgies (Sundays and weekdays) are canceled. We also are canceling all programs and meetings except for our outreach ministries.
- We do not have the ability to livestream the Mass from our church. However, we encourage you to take advantage of available broadcasts, including the Mercy Home broadcast Sundays at 9:30AM on WGN television. Daily and Sunday Masses can be viewed via phone or computer at www.catholicTV.org or on the Catholic TV television network.
- We are a church who serves the poor. Therefore, we will do everything possible to continue our outreach ministries during this time.
- Volunteers in our BEDS and Food Pantry ministries are expected to remain home if you are sick, are in a high-risk group, or fear that your participation creates an excessive risk to you or your family.
- The church will be open daily for prayer from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM and for Eucharistic Adoration this Thursday from 6:00 – 7:00 PM.

Parish office hours remain the same; but all staff members may not be on site. Staff have been given the option to work from the office or from home, except for maintenance staff as necessary. As a matter of social justice, our hourly employees will be paid their *regular* weekly wage during this time.

Current information, including this week's bulletin, can be found on the parish website. We will do our best to keep you informed.

Obviously, all Catholics in the Archdiocese have been given a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass. All are reminded of the following preventive measures that we all should be following.

- ✓ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- ✓ Avoid touching your face, especially the eyes, nose, ears, and mouth.
- ✓ Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.
- ✓ If you are ill or your health is in any way compromised, please remain home and avoid crowds as much as possible.

This is for your own sake and out of compassion for others.

We feel the sadness and anxiety of this moment. This was not a decision we or Cardinal Cupich make lightly. We believe that this is a moment when we must look beyond ourselves and act out of care for each other and the world.

We hold in our hearts all those who have been touched by this disease. And more than ever in this time, we lean on each other to be a church of courage, compassion, responsibility, and hope.

Fr. Bill Tkachuk and the Staff of St. Francis Xavier