

**Press Release from the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City**  
**Re: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Based on Bishop Oscar A. Solis' consultation with senior diocesan staff and the announcement from Governor Gary R. Herbert regarding the precautions to be taken with regard to the coronavirus disease, Bishop Solis is suspending the public celebration of worship, including Sunday, weekday and other Holy Masses from March 14 to March 31, or until further notice.

During this time, Catholic school facilities will close and instruction to students will be provided remotely. Each individual school will contact parents and inform them of how instruction will be delivered at home for each grade level.

The Utah Catholic Schools do not have any confirmed cases of COVID-19, but some students and family members have been quarantined due to their possible exposure to the virus. All other parish or school meetings, public gatherings and other events also are canceled. Funerals and weddings are to be postponed when possible; otherwise, these are to be limited to immediate family members only.

Private Confessions will depend on the availability of the priest.

Churches may remain open for personal prayer as appropriate; holy water fonts must be emptied to help avoid transmission of virus.

By reason of this emergency, a general dispensation is given from the Sunday and Holy Day obligation. Catholics are asked to pray at home, with the rosary, biblical prayer, personal devotions and/or to devoutly watch televised Masses. It is appropriate to pray for the healing of those suffering the current outbreak of illness, for health professionals, public officials and those serving the common good, and to ask that our merciful and loving Father will strengthen our faith and trust in His goodness and divine providence.

“In view of the very serious development of the growing, unpredictable and uncontrolled spread of the coronavirus and with an abundance of caution, it is critical to have clearly defined measures to guide us in facing this pandemic and protecting everyone,” Bishop Solis said. “It is no longer about containment of the spread of the disease but preventing the loss of lives and the greater well-being of the faithful.”

For information, contact Jean Hill, Diocese of Salt Lake City government liaison, 801.328.8641 ext. 336.