



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday March 19 2020

Catholic Masses in SA suspended

The Catholic Church in South Australia has suspended the celebration of all Mass services and other major liturgical events.

This follows advice from health authorities and the Federal Government's decision to ban any gatherings of more than 100 people due to COVID-19.

The temporary suspension of worship in Catholic churches across the State includes Holy Week and Easter celebrations such as Holy Thursday Mass, Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday Mass.

Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ, Adelaide Archdiocese Apostolic Administrator and Bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie, said the unprecedented move was necessary to help reduce the spread of Coronavirus.

"This has been an extremely difficult decision and I am fully aware of the impact it will have on the faithful, particularly at this time of year," he said.

"But I am also confident that all Catholics are committed to playing their part in slowing down the spread of the virus.

"We want to do what's best for the health and wellbeing of the whole community, and protect the most vulnerable amongst us, especially our elderly and infirm."

Baptisms, wedding and funerals will continue as long as the gathering is restricted to immediate family and close friends, and don't exceed limits established by the Government.

Priests and deacons will be available to visit individuals, especially those who are unwell and vulnerable. This includes the Viaticum, the Anointing of the Sick and individual Reconciliation, while observing social distancing protocols.

Bishop O'Kelly said the coronavirus outbreak had a significant impact on not only parishes and schools but also the Church's extensive network of social services, health and aged care providers, and charitable organisations.

"A whole-of-Church task force has been established to respond to the coronavirus in a bid to minimise the short and long term impact across these sectors," he said.

"We are exploring options for the faithful to continue to receive spiritual nourishment, such as live streaming Mass, as well as doing all we can to support the vulnerable and isolated."

Further information:

Jenny Brinkworth

M: 0438 727 677

T: 08 8210 8117