



*Go Make Disciples*

**COMMUNICATIONS**  
ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Archbishop Coakley issues further measures to combat Coronavirus**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, issued further directives for Catholic churches in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to help protect against the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

“As we already begin to experience the effects of the coronavirus on our daily routines, it is important we stay connected and aware of necessary precautions to reduce exposure and to keep our most vulnerable parishioners safe.

I have added to our commonsense measures for Mass, confessions and all parish, school and archdiocesan events and activities effective through March 31. I ask everyone to take personal responsibility and practice healthy habits, including washing hands often and not attending Mass when ill, at risk or when caring for someone who is sick.

I will be monitoring the situation as it changes day-by-day and week-by-week with input from our priests, my staff and health professionals. We are walking this way of the cross together.

Let us come together in prayer for all of our brothers and sisters around the world who are sick and for health care professionals, caregivers and civic leaders who are working tirelessly to respond to this pandemic.

May the Divine Physician be with all those affected by this illness and restore us quickly to health and a sense of wellbeing.”

### **Archbishop Coakley implemented the following temporary precautions for churches in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City through March 31:**

- There will be no elimination of scheduled public Masses;
- Elderly and at-risk parishioners are encouraged not to attend Mass;

- Parishioners who are elderly, those in weakened health conditions, parishioners who are ill or have symptoms of illness, and those who may have been exposed to the Coronavirus are dispensed from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass.
- Confessions should be made behind a screen whenever possible;
- Holy Water fonts should be emptied for the duration of the Lenten Season;
- Priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands thoroughly before and after Mass, and use hand sanitizer before distributing Holy Communion;
- Avoid physical contact;
- Temporarily discontinue the distribution of the Precious Blood at Mass;
- Avoid shaking of hands at the Sign of Peace and during the customary greeting of parishioners by the celebrant before and after Mass;
- In charity, communion in the hand is strongly encouraged to avoid contact with the tongue, except in the Extraordinary Form of the Mass;
- All should cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or use the inside of the elbow;
- Social distancing should be practiced;
- Avoid, cancel or postpone non-essential events and meetings;
- Remove hymnals from pews;
- Consider ways to avoid passing the collection basket through the pews;

**Find more information and updated resources at [archokc.org/health](http://archokc.org/health).**

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