
PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ottawa, March 17, 2020

**ARCHDIOCESE OF OTTAWA ANNOUNCES
SUSPENSION OF MASSES AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The Archdiocese of Ottawa announced this afternoon the suspension of Masses amid the current health threat due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

“It is with regret that we must temporarily suspend all public celebration of the Mass and other gatherings of Catholics in the Archdiocese,” said Archbishop Terrence Prendergast in a statement to the clergy, religious, and faithful of the Archdiocese.

“This extraordinary step is being taken out of concern especially for the most vulnerable to the deadly coronavirus in our families and our society and in cooperation with the requests made by those responsible for public health in our region, province, and country.”

The request to limit the size of groups gathering for social and even religious purposes made taking this step necessary.

The Archbishop noted that this was a difficult decision not taken lightly because of the central role that the Mass plays in Catholic life.

He requested continuing prayers for those who have been afflicted by the virus, their families, and caregivers as well as those who are fearful at this critical time. “We need also to keep in our prayers the medical professionals—the doctors, nurses, public health and civil authorities striving to assist those who are ill and to contain the outbreak,” the Archbishop noted.

Catholics are encouraged at this time to participate in the holy sacrifice of the Mass via Mass shown on television or the internet. They are invited to continue to pray at home with their families and join with the virtual Mass by making an act of spiritual communion.

Initially, the suspension of the public celebration of Masses will be from March 18 to April 5. Decisions regarding the celebration of Holy Week and Easter will be taken later.

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