

Update from Bishop Duca on Shelter in Place Directive -- 23 March 2020

To the Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Baton Rouge

Yesterday Governor Edwards enacted a “shelter at home” directive for the whole state of Louisiana. While not total isolation or full quarantine, the faithful are encouraged to minimize contact with outside individuals aside from family in the household by only participating in essential activities such as visiting the doctor, grocery shopping, or purchasing prescriptions and other medical supplies. Mindful of these further developments, the following will be in effect in the Diocese of Baton Rouge beginning today, Monday, 23 March 2020:

1. Clergy should continue to offer the sacraments according to the directives set forth in my communication to them dated 17 March 2020. They are reminded to practice proper social distancing, promote practices of good hygiene especially handwashing, and to be prudent and limited in their interactions with parishioners.
2. All non-sacramental events at parishes should continue to be suspended postponed or cancelled until further notice. No firm commitments should be made for any new or rescheduled events until further notice from me.
3. All Diocesan office buildings at the Catholic Life Center will close to the public effective today, 23 March 2020. Although the buildings are closed we remain open to help you during this difficult time. The Catholic Life Center (225-387-0561) and Catholic Charities (225-336-8700) employees will work remotely during this period; you may continue to call or email for assistance.
4. Parishes should follow a similar approach, closing parish offices to the public, designating essential personnel along with appropriate time schedules.

After Easter or when necessary as the circumstances change, I will make a further determination regarding extending or retracting any of the above provisions based upon the current need in our community to slow and prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

Continue to do what is safe to slow the spread of this pandemic; know that I am concerned and praying for Divine Assistance!

In Christ our Hope,

Most Reverend Michael Gerard Duca
Bishop of Baton Rouge

*Given at the Chancery of Baton Rouge
23 March 2020*