



Catholic Strategies COVID-19 Response for Dioceses

Sample direct mail letter from a bishop to every registered household

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As the weeks of the coronavirus crisis continue across our nation and around the world, we have prayed for and seen countless acts of mercy, which assure us of God's presence even in the midst of unimaginable suffering and stress. From the selfless service of doctors, nurses, healthcare workers and first responders, to the small but significant ways in which neighbors are helping neighbors, people are responding with faith, hope, and courage in this unprecedented moment in modern times.

Among the most dramatic ways we all have had to adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic and control the spread of the virus is the suspension of Holy Mass and refraining from gathering in community. This fasting from the Eucharist and from communal prayer has prompted many to realize, once again, just how precious the sacrifice of the Mass is, and how we may have taken for granted our ability to receive Communion on a regular basis. It will be a joyous celebration, indeed, to be reunited to Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist when this crisis has passed.

Please know that we bishops and priests miss our parishioners deeply! When we offer our private Masses each day, we are praying for your intentions. I hope you are praying a prayer of spiritual communion often, and that you are comforted by the constant presence of our Lord even when you cannot receive him physically.

In addition to the impact on our spiritual lives, the crisis is having significant financial and economic impacts on us all. Our inability to gather each week at Mass also means your parish is unable to receive your offertory gift there, and I cannot stress to you how vital this support is to your parish and the people who work there. Parish and parochial-school operating budgets depend on this revenue to pay employees and all the other monthly expenses associated with running the church. Most parishes don't have large sums in reserve. Your continued support of your parish is crucial now. Please go to our online giving page at [URL] or use the QR code at the bottom of this letter to get to the site, and set up your regular contributions to your parish as soon as possible. Of course, you may also mail your contribution to your parish. Either option will be greatly appreciated; however, the online giving option enables you to make a recurring gift that will give your parish greater financial stability during this crisis and in the future.

I know that many of our people also are in financial hardship because of this crisis. If your circumstances prohibit you from giving now, we understand completely and only pray that your situation improves very soon. If you are in urgent need of help, please contact our diocesan Catholic Charities offices at [web address and/or phone number].

Attending to your pastoral needs also is a great concern for your pastor and for me. We know this crisis is causing fear and anxiety, two things the Lord does not want us to experience. I urge you to go to your Bible and revisit those passages where God reminds us that, even in the midst of fear and turmoil, he is walking with us and holding us close to him..

Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God.
I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

O Most High, when I am afraid, in you I place my trust.
Psalms 56:4

For God did not give us a spirit of fear but rather of power and love and self-control.
2 Timothy 1:7

Finally, I urge you to go online to see the many ways in which priests and others in ministry are trying to support you during this crisis. From live-streamed and taped Masses to virtual Scripture studies, encouraging social media posts to live-streamed rosaries, there are a variety of resources to help you stay connected with Jesus and his Church. You and your family can make this a meaningful time in your spiritual journeys as, together, we wait to be reunited in our faith communities. *[Include any links you want to share with your people.]*

Thank you for your prayers, your faithfulness, and your support. May the Lord bless and keep each of you and your loved ones during this challenging and historic time.

[To add a QR code to the bottom of the letter, go to <https://www.qrcode-monkey.com>. This is a free service.]