

OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

Pastoral Center, 3940 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY 40213-1463
(502) 585-3291 | (502) 585-2466 (Fax) | archbishop@archlou.org

April 21, 2020

Dear Father,

May God bless you during this holy season of Easter!

Every day I hear stories about how well you are providing pastoral care to those you serve. Online streaming of Masses and prayer services, gatherings with grieving families in funeral homes, and calls to folks feeling isolated provide but a few examples. I pray for you each day and hope you are caring for yourself during these challenging times.

At the end of the month, I will be participating in webinar for bishops on how we as Church can continue to fulfil our mission and responsibilities to the faithful. I also will be coordinating a conference call for the bishops of our province to gain further insights and to support one another. In May, I hope to be able to meet with our Priests' Council through a Zoom meeting for updates and insights from our brothers about their experiences and how we can be helpful to one another.

In this memo, I will update you about recent developments and provide some new directions.

Offices and Public Gatherings

With continuing concern for health and safety, archdiocesan agency offices will remain closed through May 15, and parishes are asked to do the same. As a rule, staff should only go to offices on an as-needed basis. Exceptions are made for particular personnel with critical responsibilities for keeping operations intact as best we can.

Parish Liturgies

In light of the need for social distancing, I must extend the suspension of public Masses for another two weeks until May 15, with the possibility that these limits could continue even longer. There may be an option for smaller weekday gatherings before weekend liturgies return, but we are not yet ready for that alternative. We will continue to communicate with weekly updates to allow you time to plan accordingly.

Confirmations

I deeply regret not being able to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation during this pandemic. I have postponed scheduled Confirmations for the months of May and June. Pastors may wish to reschedule the celebration for later in the year and may contact Connie DuPlessis to assist with rescheduling. As an alternative, upon request I will grant the pastor faculties to administer the sacrament after the suspension has been lifted.

Personnel

The Finance Office has reported that parishes have been financially able to continue to pay employees at this time. The Payroll Protection Plan should allow salaries and benefits to be covered through the end of June. An attachment to this memo provides additional instructions to assist you with administrative and personnel questions.

Parish Finances

Last Monday, April 13, pastors were asked to stay alert for requests for signatures and closing documents for the federal *Paycheck Protection Program* loans. We know the process was frustrating for us, as we often had to redo documents. The various banks involved had very different processes. While not fully successful, we are pleased that at the end of the first round of loans, 54 of our parishes received funding. Likewise, archdiocesan agencies such as Catholic Charities received funding. In total, more than \$8 million of support arrived or was scheduled for closings with banks. The second round of loans will hopefully be made available this week, and more parishes are in line to receive support.

Under the CARES ACT, these loans are forgivable so long as the organization is using the funds to prevent furloughs and keep staff on payroll. The funds cover salaries and benefits and a limited number of other items. The Finance Office will provide assistance to parishes for the record-keeping and required reporting processes.

A few weeks ago, we established an online donation service on our web page so that anyone can make a gift to any parish. To date, more than \$64,000 has been contributed through that site in addition to any funds sent directly to parishes.

The Finance Office remains available to transfer funds from your savings or to discuss any financial challenges. Please reach out to them as needed.

Updated Directives Concerning Pastoral Care and General Operations

- 1. Parish may not hold public Masses. These restrictions remain in place through May 15 or longer if needed.**
- 2. Parish offices should remain closed through May 15.**
- 3. When possible, staff are asked to work from home with exceptions made to maintain a critical service.**
- 4. No employees should be furloughed or laid-off. This response should remain in place through the month of June. (Please note: Employees whose job comes to an end or whose positions are scheduled to be eliminated are not subject to this ruling).**
- 5. If your parish is facing immediate financial difficulty, please contact the Finance Office for assistance.**

With concerns being expressed about parish income and expense, after consultation with the Consultors, these additional directives are now added.

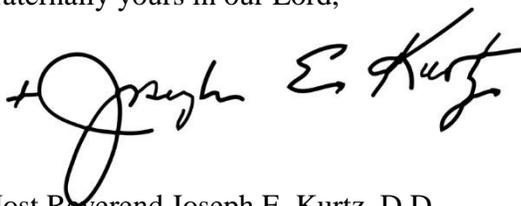
- 6. Salaries for all priests and lay employees should remain at their present level for the remainder of this calendar year. Any planned raises that would have been provided on July 1 or with the new school year should be delayed until at least January 1, 2021. Salaries for new positions or new hires are not subject to this restriction.**
- 7. Employees who were not able to work remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic were required to use their sick days or borrow them from future days. Sick days charged for this reason and during this period will now be restored to the number the employee had as of March 16, 2020. No sick days will be charged to an employee missing work due to COVID-19 through the month of June. The necessary use of sick days may return after that time.**

Thank you for understanding and implementing these necessary directives. Please see the attached addendum with important financial and personnel information.

My plans are to continue to provide you with weekly updates as we key an eye on the horizon.

Please know of my prayers for all of you.

Fraternally yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph E. Kurtz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "E".

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.
Archbishop of Louisville

Attachment (1)

Addendum

Guidelines on Personnel and Budget Administration

Many parishes have raised legitimate concerns about reduced income in light of lower collections, the loss of picnic income, or reduced enrollment in school or childcare programs. Please consider these notes if it is necessary to make budget or staffing changes for next fiscal year.

1. 10-Month Employees: While no employees should be furloughed or laid-off, once schools are closed a number of positions are no longer active and pay ceases. This is not a lay-off since the job has ended for this school year.
2. School Contracts: School contracts for 2019-2020 remain in place. New contracts for the 2020-2021 school year are to be offered by June 1 and should be prepared in consideration of the salary freeze directed by Archbishop Kurtz. Once the salary hold is lifted, the contracts can be edited to reflect increases given at that time.
3. Staff Changes: If staff size is to be permanently reduced effective in July or August, employees should be informed in writing by June 1. After that time, any job eliminations require a minimum 30-day notice. Employees under contract may not have their job eliminated once the new contract is issued. Contact the Personnel Office for assistance about all staff eliminations.
4. PPP Loans: If a parish is the recipient of a Paycheck Protection Program loan, they should consult with the Finance Office for guidance on the use of the funds and necessary record keeping in order to ensure loan forgiveness.
5. Budget Reductions: While salaries and benefits are the largest expenses of most parishes, if necessary, additional saving can be realized by any of the following: restrict or eliminate travel and costs for conferences outside the Archdiocese; delay facility improvements; delay equipment purchases; restructure debt. Please be in touch with the Finance Office about restructuring debt.