

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

NO MASSES TODAY

PLEASE READ BELOW FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

From: **Office of Preparation | Catholic Diocese of Richmond** <prepared@richmonddiocese.org>

Date: Sat, Mar 14, 2020 at 11:13 PM

Subject: **URGENT UPDATE: Masses in Deanery 4 and 5**

To: Office of Preparation | Catholic Diocese of Richmond <prepared@richmonddiocese.org>

Dear Pastors of Deaneries 4 and 5,

Earlier today, the Virginia Department of Health announced the first fatality of the coronavirus in Virginia. We pray for the repose of the soul of the first casualty of the coronavirus in Virginia and his family.

At 9:30 pm this evening (March 14), the Peninsula County Administrators and City Managers representing James City County, Williamsburg City, York County, Newport News City, Hampton City, and Poquoson City publicly urged Peninsula residents to avoid gatherings of more than 50 people including church services, civic/social organization meetings, and public events and festivities. The announcement can be found here: <https://jamescitycountyva.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=3744>.

In light of this information, Bishop Knestout asks all pastors of parishes located in these jurisdictions to take the following actions based on the local parish circumstances to the best of their ability given the late notice.

Post the attached announcement on your parish website and the entrances to the parish.

1. Notify parishioners that due to this announcement that they are dispensed from attending Mass.
2. Monitor the numbers of parishioners who attend Masses and strive to keep the numbers for each Mass to below 50 people. The Mass should be celebrated with no music or homily. Additional Masses may be added at the pastor's discretion.
3. If keeping the numbers for each Mass to below 50 is not feasible, and at the pastor's discretion, parish Masses can be cancelled until further notice.

As the situation continues to evolve, we will communicate to you via email and our diocesan website (richmonddiocese.org/coronavirus). Thank you for your ongoing pastoral care for the parishioners of your parishes. My prayers are with you.

Sincerely in Our Lord,

Very Rev. Michael G. Boeling, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, Catholic Diocese of Richmond

