



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

April 2, 2020

Dear brother Priests,

I thank you very much for joining me in so many different ways to provide for the pastoral care of our people all throughout the Archdiocese during this very uncertain and difficult time of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We have made every attempt with our Archdiocesan directives to be reasonable and balanced as we are all confronted with circumstances that we have never before experienced. Once again, I thank you for your cooperation and patience during this unprecedented time.

Adhering to the guidance provided by government and health agencies, we must observe the regulations with regard to crowd size and social distancing in every instance. Therefore, during this period of precaution, please do not invite the faithful to gather in anyway where the crowd size will grow beyond more than ten, indoors or outdoors. Also, I ask that you keep your churches open for some time and allow opportunities for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. In Pennsylvania, religious purposes are an exemption to the current stay at home policy. People should be able to visit their parish church to pray. If we need to revisit this archdiocesan directive, we will.

This year the annual Chrism Mass will be celebrated by me in a private manner on Monday of Holy Week, April 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the Cathedral Basilica. This is a loss for all of us but essential given current governmental and health agency's restrictions. Nonetheless, I invite you to join me as I celebrate this Mass via live streaming through the website of the Archdiocese or my Facebook page. The worship aid will also be available to you so that we can renew our priestly promises together. Information about the distribution of the new oils will follow at a later time.

I pray that this Holy Week, which for all of us will be different, will be a source of grace and consolation to you and those entrusted to your pastoral care.

Faternally in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nelson J. Pérez" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.
Archbishop of Philadelphia