

## DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER MEMORANDUM

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To: Pastors with Cemeteries, Directors of Cemeteries, and Business Managers of Cemeteries  
From: David Gabert, Director of Cemetery Operations  
Date: March 20, 2020  
RE: Cemetery Operations and the Coronavirus Pandemic

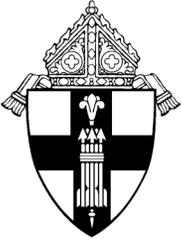
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During these challenging times as we are faced with coronavirus pandemic, everyone has concerns about health and safety and we ask ourselves many questions both from a personal and a ministerial perspective on how to move forward. While it is our ministry to serve God's people, we must always be concerned for the health and welfare of all.

I have received several inquiries as to how we in the cemetery ministry are to proceed. It is imperative that you follow not only the guidelines being promoted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) via the following link <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#funerals>] but also the directives being communicated by our Bishop and government officials.

While all of us know the new normal - social distancing, limit unnecessary travel, avoid groups of people, and, most importantly, wash your hands (for at least 20 seconds or 2 Hail Mary's), I offer some additional **recommendations** for cemetery personnel that are continuing their ministries:

- Committal services be graveside only and not take place indoors in our cemetery chapels;
- Outdoor graveside services are for the immediate family only. This can be recommended to the funeral homes;
- Inform funeral directors as additional restrictions and limitations are implemented by our Bishop;
- Lot sale presentations be limited to "at need only" – and encourage on-line or phone arrangements;
- Suspend pre-need sales of lots and memorials unless they can be conducted on-line or by phone;
- Limited public access to cemetery offices and other indoor facilities except to conduct at-need arrangements;
- Keep families informed – both those who already have services scheduled and as new services are scheduled – as additional restrictions and limitations are implemented by the Bishop and government officials;
- Gloves should be worn when handling a casket, equipment, burial permits, lot licenses, body receipts, payment, and when opening mail;
- Continue wiping down surfaces, credit cards, pens, the interior of vehicles, equipment, tools and etc;
- Keep distance from funeral home personnel and mourners;
- Limit staff from riding in vehicles together – including cemetery trucks and other vehicles;



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- Ensure that your staff has read and understands the CDC guidelines established, and;
- For our larger cemeteries schedule staff in rotating shifts, with one group staying home to ensure coverage in the event of staff illness.

While this is a difficult time for all of us, we remember that we are a community of faith, and together we will get through these difficult times. Let us continue to pray for all those affected by this virus.

As always, don't hesitate to call or e-mail any questions or concerns – I am happy to help!