



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

Communications Department

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For Immediate Release

Catholic Bishop suspends celebration of Mass and all liturgical events effective Friday, March 20

Venice, Fla. - In a letter to the faithful dated March 18, 2020, Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Venice in Florida, announces that “**regularly scheduled Masses and other Liturgical events in Parish Churches in the Diocese of Venice will be suspended from March 20, 2020 until after Easter, when the situation can be re-evaluated. Visitation to Churches to pray is also suspended. Therefore, the Faithful and visitors to the Diocese are dispensed from any obligation to attend Mass during this period.**”

Bishop Dewane acknowledged the sacrifice for the Catholic Faithful, “who have a great love for the Holy Eucharist and depend on the Most Blessed Sacrament for their spiritual lives. Do recall that Faithful Catholics, throughout the history of the Church, have kept the faith alive through trying times. By prayer and devotion, as well as spiritual solidarity with each other, the life of faith continued to be a source of strength and perseverance during persecutions and other times of public crisis. Tomorrow (March 19), on the Feast of St. Joseph, I will dedicate the Diocese of Venice to the care of the Foster Father of Jesus. Let us be united in prayer to St. Joseph for his intercession and protection.”

The letter also notes that the Diocesan priests have been asked to draw upon the Church’s rich tradition of prayer and devotion to ensure that the spiritual life of parishioners is nourished and remains vibrant through means which are prudently adapted to the current circumstances. The Diocesan website (www.dioceseofvenice.org) has a list of opportunities to view the celebration of the Holy Mass.

While Mass will not be available in parishes, the Diocese of Venice in Florida has long produced a Televised Catholic Mass for the Homebound. For those seeking a spiritual connection to the Catholic Church during this time of difficulty, the weekly Sunday Mass airs on the CW at 9:30 a.m., in the Northern Deanery (Manatee, Sarasota, DeSoto, Charlotte, Hardee, Highlands counties) and



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on Fox 4 at 10:30 a.m. Sundays in the Southern Deanery (Charlotte, Lee, Collier, Glades, Hendry counties). The Mass is also available on the Diocese website at www.dioceseofvenice.org/tvmass.

Bishop Dewane continues to closely monitor developments regarding the threat posed by the coronavirus and will make further announcements regarding Mass as the situation warrants.

Please note that Bishop Dewane previously announced the suspension of classes in all Catholic Schools within the Diocese until at least April 15, 2020.

For a full copy of Bishop's Letter dated March 18, 2020 click the link below.

<https://dioceseofvenice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020Parishioners-coronavirusfinal.pdf>