



## DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

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*Communications Department*

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\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

### **Catholic Bishop grants dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice**

**Venice** - Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Venice in Florida, has been closely monitoring developments regarding the threat posed by the Coronavirus, particularly for the most vulnerable among us. A number of precautions have been implemented in parishes across the 10-county Diocese to mitigate the spread of this virus.

In a letter to the faithful, dated March 14, Bishop Dewane stated:

“Out of pastoral concern, a dispensation has been issued from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass for those effected by the Coronavirus. Now that a national emergency has been declared and the State of Florida has provided further guidance, many of the Catholic Faithful may deem it prudent to avoid large gatherings. Therefore, out of an abundance of spiritual concern, I now extend the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass to all the Catholic Faithful until further notice.”

The letter continues: “The celebration of the Holy Eucharist will continue in our churches with the necessary precautions. All the Catholic Faithful are asked to observe the Lord’s Day with reverence and in spiritual communion with one another, whether you attend Mass or not during this time.”

Further, in an addendum to the letter, Bishop Dewane took the following additional precautions, which are effective immediately throughout the Diocese of Venice:

- Classes will be suspended in all Catholic Schools within the Diocese of Venice until March 30, 2020.
- All Parish Religious Education and Youth activities will be suspended until March 30, 2020.
- Parish events should be postponed or canceled through March 30, 2020.



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- Parish and Diocesan offices will remain open during this time.

The Diocese continues to closely monitor the situation and will issue updates as appropriate on the Diocesan website [www.dioceseofvenice.org](http://www.dioceseofvenice.org).

The Diocese of Venice in Florida has long produced a Televised Catholic Mass for the Homebound to fulfill the Sunday Obligation. For those unable to attend the Mass and seeking a spiritual connection to the Catholic Church during this time of difficulty, the Mass airs on the CW at 9:30 a.m. Sundays in the Northern Deanery (Manatee, Sarasota, DeSoto, Charlotte, Hardee, Highlands counties) and on Fox 4 at 10:30 a.m. Sundays in the Southern Deanery (Charlotte, Lee, Collier, Glades, Hendry counties) and is also available on the Diocese website at [www.dioceseofvenice.org](http://www.dioceseofvenice.org).

Bishop Dewane concluded his letter to the faithful:

“As Holy Mother Church makes her pilgrimage through the Lenten Season, please be assured of my continuing prayerful encouragement and support. Let us be united in prayer that God, who is our refuge and strength, will give us courage and perseverance in charity during this time, that we might remain healthy and encourage our brothers and sisters who are ill.”