



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

March 13, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Mass is the source and summit of our Christian life and allows us to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist and strengthens our sense of community. As Catholics, we are all obliged to participate in Mass on Sundays and other Holy Days of Obligation. Yet in these difficult times, there is also an obligation to protect the vulnerable and those who may care for them.

During the current public health emergency facing all, for guidance we look to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the State Health Department to help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. As regards the Mass, several precautions have already been put into place within the Diocese of Venice to limit the spread of this virus.

Out of pastoral concern for the health and wellbeing of the Faithful, the following dispensations are indicated: those who are sick and those providing care for them; those with chronic medical conditions or severely compromised immune systems; those whose age or frailty causes them to be at greater risk; those that have been exposed to the coronavirus; and those who, because of anxiety, may decide not to attend Mass, are dispensed from the obligation. Until further notice, this dispensation shall remain valid. If circumstances dictate otherwise in coming days, the Diocese will make a timely announcement.

As Catholics, we trust in the power of prayer. Please join me in praying for all those who have lost their life and their loved ones, may they be consoled. We also pray for the sick, caretakers, medical providers and all impacted by this pandemic. United for a common good, we can overcome fear and together face the challenges in the days ahead.

The Diocese will continue to monitor the situation and update, as appropriate, on the Diocesan website www.dioceseofvenice.org.

During this Lenten Season, and this time of trial, I extend to each of you the assurances of my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida