



ARCHBISHOP OF DETROIT

March 12, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I write to assure you of my prayers during this distressing time. As people of God, we must be united in prayer and united in hope. I invite you to pray for health care workers, first responders, and all who are and will offer compassionate service and healing in the days to come. Above all, let us pray for those who are ill with the Coronavirus, for their healing and comfort, and strength and peace for their families. Let us also pray for those who have died because of the virus. People of prayer are never helpless – never hopeless.

We also must be prudent as the virus spreads. Let us rely on the good judgement of health care officials and government leaders. [We have announced steps in the Archdiocese of Detroit to prevent and limit the spread of the virus at our parishes and schools](#), and please know that we continue to carefully monitor the situation in southeast Michigan and throughout the world. We are following the guidance of local, state, and federal government and health officials.

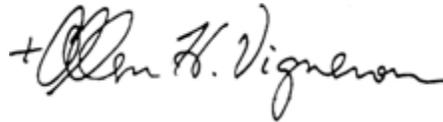
If you do not feel well, please use good judgment and stay home, including from Mass. The obligation we have to attend Mass on Sunday does not apply when your health and the health of others is seriously threatened should you attend Mass. I extend this counsel to those of you with significant, pre-existing health concerns which, in your prayerful judgement and with the help of your doctors, necessitate that you avoid large crowds while the virus is spreading.

The wise advice of one's physician is a gift from the Lord not to be ignored: "From God the doctor has wisdom" (Sirach 38:2). You are excused from your Sunday Mass obligation in situations where there is a physical or moral impossibility. Nevertheless, the precept remains of keeping the Lord's Day holy, which requires that we refrain from servile work on Sunday and increase our love of the Lord and charity to others through prayer and service. Where possible, participation in a broadcast ([online, radio or TV](#)) of the Sunday Mass and a [Spiritual Communion](#) are advised.

UNLEASH THE GOSPEL

The Sacred Scripture also admonishes us: “When you are ill, do not delay, but pray to God for it is he who heals” (Sirach 38:9). It is particularly important to heed this counsel in this sacred season. During these days of Lent, as we reflect daily on Christ’s passion, in our prayers we recognize that he is journeying with us during this time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. This truly is a Lent like no other. Let us entrust ourselves to Our Lady of Lourdes, patron for those who suffer illness. Through her intercession, may God grant healing and protection to the people of southeast Michigan and beyond. And let us, by the courageous hope with which we face the challenge of the virus’ spread, give witness to our confidence in the good news of the Lord’s victory over suffering and death.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Allen H. Vigneron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit