

DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE
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April 8, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in Jesus Christ.

My heart aches due to the suspension of the public celebration of Mass. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our life. Nonetheless, God is with us and continues to draw us closer to him. Let our desire for the Eucharist grow and deepen so that we will participate in the Mass with greater fervor and devotion when the suspension comes to an end.

Moreover, I am edified to hear how our priests, deacons, religious and lay faithful are reaching out to each other via the telephone, social media and other remote means to extend the love of Jesus Christ. During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, let us all continue to pray for each other and support each other in our faith. Though we may not be present physically, the unity we have with each other in Jesus Christ is deep and real. We are never alone if we are with Jesus, and we are never separated from each other if we all remain united to Jesus. I am moved by the strong and beautiful faith that is quite evident in our parishioners across the Upper Peninsula.

In light of the State of Michigan Legislature's vote on April 7, 2020, to extend the state of emergency until April 30, 2020, and to ensure the pastoral care of the faithful while engaging in best practices to limit the spread of disease, I issue the following directives effective through **April 30, 2020**.

- I hereby extend the suspension of the celebration of public Mass in the Diocese of Marquette, and I grant a dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.
- The live broadcast of private Masses, such as through live streaming on the internet, is encouraged. For the live broadcast of private Masses, if more than one priest is living in a rectory, they may concelebrate. In addition, one deacon may be present to assist, and one lector and one cantor may be present to exercise these ministries when broadcasting.
- Churches are to remain closed.
- The outdoor Eucharistic Procession and Benediction directives issued on March 31, 2020 remain in effect.
- The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is to be celebrated after Easter. It may be postponed until the restrictions are lifted, or a private celebration of the rite may be held. For the private celebration, only the candidates/catechumens, sponsors and spouses may be present, with great care to maintain proper distances and with a total of only 10 people or fewer present including the celebrant. More than one private celebration may need to be held to accommodate the number of candidates and catechumens so that no more than 10 people are present. The abbreviated rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances is to be used for the private celebration.

- The Sacrament of Penance may be celebrated by establishing an outdoor station for confessions with a screen, provided that safe distances are maintained, and any assembly of people is avoided.
- Priests may celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick on an individual basis, according to the directives of the respective health care institutions. Outside of health care institutions, the priests are to follow the instructions given to them to limit the spread of disease.
- The Confirmations scheduled during this time are postponed and will be rescheduled after the restrictions are lifted.
- Parish celebrations of First Communion scheduled during this time are to be postponed until after the restrictions are lifted.
- The Sacrament of Baptism may be postponed until the restrictions are lifted, or a private celebration may be held with only the presence of the parents and sponsor(s). The abbreviated Order of Baptism of Children in Danger of Death is to be used, and the baptism is to be celebrated with the pouring of water only, not immersion.
- The Sacrament of Matrimony may be postponed until the restrictions are lifted, or a private celebration may be held with only the presence of the bride, groom and two witnesses. The Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass is to be used.
- The Funeral Masses and the preceding Vigil remain suspended. The Rite of Committal may be celebrated outdoors in the cemetery with only the presence of the immediate family, maintaining safe distances. It is recommended that priests celebrate a private Mass for the deceased and that a public memorial Mass be scheduled after the restrictions are lifted.
- If a priest is at greater risk due to age or underlying health conditions, he should refer the celebration of the above sacraments to another priest, except for the private celebration of Mass.

As we celebrate the most sacred mysteries of the death and resurrection of Christ, let us remember that the Father sent Jesus to save us from our sins. He will not abandon us. Rather, he continues to call us to draw closer to him.

With prayers that your hearts be filled with the *Joy of the Gospel*, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend John F. Doerfler, STD, JCL
Bishop of Marquette