

**March 16, 2020**

**Worcester Diocese Prepares to Comply with Governor's March 15 Order**

*Churches will suspend Public Masses beginning Tuesday*

MARCH 16, 2020, WORCESTER, MA -- In cooperation with Governor Baker's announcements yesterday, the Diocese of Worcester has issued the following statement by Bishop Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester:

"After carefully reviewing the sound advice of medical professionals and the recent order by Governor Baker to limit gatherings to 25 participants, I have decided to suspend all public celebrations of Mass until further notice in the hope of slowing and, God willing, halting the spread of this disease. The obligation to take part in the Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is thereby lifted."

The Bishop also announced that, by tomorrow, the Office for Divine Worship of the Diocese of Worcester will announce further details on how parishes will celebrate Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms, Confessions and other sacraments in order to help fight this pandemic while continuing to meet the Church's obligation to care for the spiritual well-being of believers, especially at this time of crisis.

In the meantime, the Bishop is encouraging all Catholics to continue to pray with the local Catholic community by virtual attendance at the Sunday Mass and Daily Mass which is carried on Spectrum (Charter) Channel 193 each weekday morning at 9 am and Sundays at 6 pm, and also streaming on [worcesterdiocese.org](http://worcesterdiocese.org) and on many parish websites. Additional prayer resources will be produced weekly and distributed via parishes by email and their websites to continue to pray for healing and hope during this pandemic. A diocesan-wide "Prayer in Time of Pandemic" in English and in Spanish is also being distributed to parishioners and on the diocesan website. Other languages will be made available in the next few days.

Additional information and links to daily and Sunday Masses are available: [www.worcesterdiocese.org](http://www.worcesterdiocese.org).