

MOST REV. DANIEL R. JENKY, C.S.C.  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
DIOCESE OF PEORIA



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March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To the Priests, Deacons, and Faithful of the Diocese of Peoria,

I had hoped to wait a week for events to further unfold before taking the dramatic step of suspending public Divine Worship. Upon wider consultation, however, I have decided that our Local Church will act in unison with other dioceses in Illinois and elsewhere and suspend all public Masses beginning this Saturday, at the Vigil Mass, on March the 14<sup>th</sup>. Those funeral Masses already scheduled in parish churches may take place. At this time, outside committal services may continue. Memorial Masses should be scheduled at a later date. Marriage ceremonies in parish churches scheduled for this Saturday may take place, and there will be further guidelines from the Office of the Vicar General for the future. Baptisms should continue but with only the parents and godparents present. Using great prudence and where it is possible, the Sacrament of the Sick and Holy Viaticum may also be administered. Masses and other liturgies in formed religious houses may continue but must not be open to the public.

Dear friends in Christ, these are perilous days but certainly not unprecedented in human history. I urge you to be patient and faith filled. Cling more closely to the Lord, and be sure to pray together at home among your family and friends. For the present, we need to break the chain of transmission of the contagion, but I know that in the future we will much more appreciate and never again take for granted the great gift of our parish communities.

May God bless and protect you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel R. Jenky C.S.C." with a stylized flourish at the beginning.

✠Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.  
BISHOP OF PEORIA