

DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

1004 Harbor Hills Drive
Marquette, Michigan 49855
www.dioceseofmarquette.org



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

(906)-227-9115

fax (906)-225-0437

March 17, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in Jesus Christ.

After spending much time in prayer, and in light of Monday evening's executive order by the governor restricting assemblies to 50 people and the recommendations of President Trump to limit groups to 10 people, I hereby suspend the public celebrations of the Mass in the Diocese of Marquette through Sunday, April 5, 2020. All Catholics are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass during this time.

In addition, funerals should be celebrated privately with family and not open to the general public.

I also ask that churches remain open so that people may come in individually and pray privately in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Given that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our life, I have taken this extraordinary measure with deep charity for the personal welfare of all of you.

During this time, I and the priests do not abandon you. We pledge to find ways to reach out to you to express our love and concern, even if this be remotely. During this time, there are also many ways that you can support your parish by touching base with parishioners who are homebound or sick, assisting a neighbor with an errand, by encouraging and supporting each other and praying daily for everyone impacted by the pandemic and or are suffering from any illness. By sharing the Gospel in your words and actions, you can bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to others at a time when it is deeply needed. Your continued financial support of your parish is also greatly appreciated and needed.

This is a time for all of us to pray and trust in the Lord. Please spend time praying in your homes and with your families. Watch the Mass on television, listen to it on the radio or stream it through internet channels. Check the diocesan website for streaming options at www.dioceseofmarquette.org.

Remember that our Lord has said, "Do not be afraid." God has foreseen that this pandemic would happen. He does not abandon us. We do not live in fear, we live in faith.

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

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads '+ John F. Doerfler'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

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