



## DIocese OF BAKER

Office of the Bishop  
641 SW Umatilla Ave. • Redmond, Oregon 97756  
Phone (541) 388-4004 • Fax (541) 388-2566  
[www.dioceseofbaker.org](http://www.dioceseofbaker.org)

March 18, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It's hard to keep pace with the corona virus. The letter I wrote you last week on 13 March limiting Mass attendance to 250 people was out of date only a few days later, when Governor Brown's directive of 16 March lowered the number for social gatherings in Oregon to 25 for the next four weeks, with the recommendation that it be capped at 10.

It is not realistically possible to restrict the populations of our Sunday assemblies to these numbers; therefore, with great reluctance, I must tell you that all public Masses throughout the Diocese are cancelled through 14 April 2020, and all the faithful of the Diocese of Baker are hereby dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass during that time.

I take this most unwelcome decision in concert with my fellow bishops throughout the Northwest and much of the United States. With them I recognize that in a time of public emergency it is the government's paramount responsibility to protect the common good of its citizens, and never more so than when their health and their very lives are gravely endangered.

This year the danger falls during Holy Week and Easter, the most sacred days on our calendar; so the empty churches are painfully difficult to bear. But the Holy Spirit is very much at work in our midst. Throughout the country people are coming up with ways to give us access to the Holy Mysteries even as we are cut off from them. In the parishes and in the Pastoral Center possibilities are beginning to emerge. Our findings will be posted on the diocesan website ([www.dioceseofbaker.org](http://www.dioceseofbaker.org)) and will be updated frequently. Please come and visit to learn how you can profit spiritually from this season of grace.

Our Lord fasted forty days and forty nights, "and He was hungry." Lent 2020 brings home to us as never before how we hunger for the Bread of Life and the Word of Salvation. "I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice," Jesus promises. "I will not leave you orphans." Recent statistics on COVID-19 show one number is rising: those who have recovered from the virus. Lent leads to Resurrection.

In Christ our Redeemer,

Most Reverend Liam Cary  
Bishop of Baker