



Bishop's Office – Bureau de l'Évêque  
30 Ste-Anne, Sudbury ON P3C 5E1  
Tel: (705) 674-2727 Fax/Télécopieur: (705) 674-9889  
[m.damphousse@ssmd.ca](mailto:m.damphousse@ssmd.ca)

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March 17, 2020

To all Pastors and faithful in the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie

Dear brother priests and dear Faithful,

"Today, the Government of Ontario announced that it is taking decisive action by making an order declaring an emergency under s 7.0.1 (1) the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. In doing so, Ontario is using every power possible to continue to protect the health and safety of all individuals and families." (News Release from the Office of the Premier, *Ontario Enacts Declaration of Emergency to Protect the Public*, March 17, 2020, 9:13 A.M.).

It is imperative that you do not take this legal order lightly.

The government has ordered that **all organized public events of over fifty (50) people be prohibited**, including communal services within our places of worship. This is in effect until March 31, 2020. Funerals and any other assembly of the faithful are included in this declaration.

We invite you to contact the Diocesan office if you have any questions regarding this new law.

Please be aware that additional communications from myself and the Diocesan Administration will be forthcoming on a daily basis during this period of unprecedented significance.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcel Damphousse".

+Marcel Damphousse  
Bishop of Sault Ste.Marie