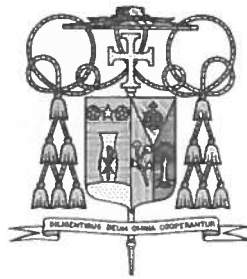


Diocese of Beaumont

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April 1, 2020

My brother priests and deacons,

With the fluidity and growing severity of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, I am now making a change in my Directives that were issued on March 23, 2020. Number 6 of those directives stated, "Priests are asked to bless palms on Palm Sunday, and inform the faithful of the location and times where palms can be picked up."

Most dioceses are prohibiting the distribution of palms this year. The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions has stated, "There is little or no control over the spread of the virus, either by passing out the palms to cars driving by or by allowing people to pick them up in the church. Most importantly, this is a poor substitute for the sacrament of the Eucharist, from which most of us must abstain. It is far more wise and prudent to refrain from distribution of palms this year."

We have been given "Stay at Home" orders by various county judges in Southeast Texas, as well as Governor Abbott. By making blessed palms available to our people in our parishes, we are inviting them to violate the "Stay at Home" order and the directive of social distancing for something that is not an essential activity. This also poses a risk for transmission of the virus. Thus, I am directing our priests to omit the distribution of palms on Palm Sunday this year. Palms are a sacramental, not a sacrament.

We look forward to being able to return to public celebrations of sacraments in our churches, when the pandemic has subsided and when the CDC has given clearance to do so. Perhaps the first time our parishioners are allowed to enter the church for celebration of the Eucharist, we might consider distributing the blessed palms outside, as we normally do on Palm Sunday, and then processing into the Church. This would be symbolic of the people waving their palms as Jesus entered Jerusalem.

I realize we are all under extraordinary constraints, as we do our part to mitigate and contain the spread of this virus. I thank you, my brother priests, for cooperating with the various directives that I have issued. You are daily in my prayer.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. J. Guillory".

Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D.
Bishop of Beaumont

CJG:sed