

Diocese of Beaumont

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DECREE

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Who would have thought a few weeks ago that we would be hearing phrases like “social distancing” and “shelter in place”, but that is the reality the coronavirus has brought upon us. I am, therefore, suspending all scheduled liturgical/sacramental celebrations and all public assemblies throughout the Diocese of Beaumont. This includes Holy Week and Easter Sunday, Confirmation, First Communion, RCIA, religious education classes, parish, school, and diocesan events, etc. All scheduled Masses are cancelled, and priests will celebrate Mass privately (without the congregation) for your intentions. Priests will be available by appointment for administration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Priests will be available for Anointing of the Sick as needed. Directives on funerals and weddings are being forwarded to your pastors.

This suspension is effective Thursday, March 19, 2020 at the end of the day. During this suspension, all the faithful of the Diocese are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. At the same time, we must continue to keep holy the Lord’s Day, at home, quietly reading and meditating on the readings of the day, praying the rosary and other devotions, or participating in the Mass via the Internet. Some of our local parishes will livestream the private Sunday Mass of the priest (no congregation present). This specific information will be posted on our diocesan website (www.dioceseofbmt.org) as it becomes available.

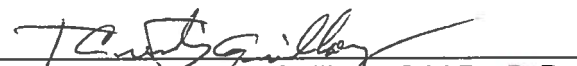
How long will the suspension last? That is an unknown, because this pandemic is unpredictable and becoming more pervasive every day. I will not lift the suspension until civil authorities give the “all clear”.

This situation is unprecedented, and, as your Bishop, I never anticipated having to mandate such extreme measures. This pandemic has forced issues upon us, which are out of our control. I ask for your prayers for all who are afflicted with this virus and those who are afraid and vulnerable. Keep in your prayers all the doctors, nurses, caregivers, and public health and civil authorities who are working to contain and mitigate the outbreak of this virus and treat those who are sick.

In his letter to the Romans (Ch. 12), St. Paul’s words encourage us during this difficult time: “Rejoice in hope, be patient under trial, persevere in prayer.”

Given this date, the 18th of March, 2020 in the Diocese of Beaumont


Sister Esther Dunegan, WBS, J.C.L.
Chancellor


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