



## **URGENT MEMORANDUM**

To: All the Faithful of the Diocese of Toledo

From: Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas

Re: Temporary Dispensation from the Obligation to Attend Sunday Mass  
for the Next Three Weekends

Date: 12 March 2020

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction, with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God (2 Cor 2:3-4)*

Having now entered into a critical phase concerning the further spreading of Coronavirus/COVID-19, a global pandemic, in accord with the spirit of Governor Michael DeWine's executive order today banning large gatherings of people numbering 100 or more, and in union with the Catholic Bishops of Ohio, I have determined it important to address this issue in the following proactive manner to protect the health and well-being of the Catholic faithful and the common good of the community.

Given the current grave situation posed by the threat of the coronavirus and in accord with the authority granted to the diocesan bishop by the Code of Canon Law (canons 87§1 and 1245), I, in union with all my brother bishops of the State of Ohio, hereby **dispense the Catholic faithful who reside in the Diocese of Toledo and all other Catholics currently in the Diocese of Toledo from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass** for the weekends of March 14-15, March 21-22 and March 28-29.

Out of charity and concern for our brothers and sisters, I urge all of the faithful seriously to consider not attending Mass on these three weekends, in particular those who are sick, experiencing symptoms of illness or are at risk of illness. Those members of the faithful who do not attend Mass on these weekends should devote some time to prayer on the Lord's Day, either alone or as a family. These faithful are, likewise, encouraged to watch/listen to a broadcast of Sunday Mass via television, radio or internet/streaming and to make a spiritual communion.

In order to allow those faithful who wish to gather and offer worship to almighty God while receiving his solace and reassuring comfort in this time of anxiety and uncertainty, regularly scheduled weekend parish Masses will continue in so far as possible.

In accord with the Governor's order, all other activities and events with a potential attendance of 100 people or more should be cancelled, postponed or rescheduled until further notice.

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