



Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

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Office of the Bishop

March 27, 2020

Dear Priests, Deacons, Religious, and Faithful in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama:

It is with sadness that I write to you today to say that, after consulting with our priests, public authorities, and health experts, I judge it necessary to extend the suspension of public worship that I first issued on March 17, 2020. The suspension shall now continue through the day before Divine Mercy Sunday – April 18, 2020. Accordingly, I have asked Fr. Justin Ward, Vicar for Sacred Liturgy, to compile guidelines for the celebration of Holy Week and Easter without a congregation present, following the indications recently given by the Vatican; these are enclosed with this letter.

I am most grateful to the many priests who have been celebrating daily Masses privately in their churches or chapels and even streaming them on the internet, so that parishioners and others may remain connected and seek spiritual nourishment. I encourage our priests to continue these praiseworthy endeavors.

Of course, I continue to pray for you also, remembering you in my own daily celebration of Holy Mass. Even if we must practice “social distancing” at this time, we remain united in the Spirit, rejoicing in hope.

Let us also be sure to remember daily all who have been affected by COVID-19, including the many healthcare workers who are showing heroic sacrifice and generosity in responding to this crisis.

With an assurance of prayers for you and your loved ones, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.
Apostolic Administrator of Birmingham in Alabama

RJB:bwj

Enclosures