

DIOCESE OF WINONA - ROCHESTER

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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STATEMENT REGARDING DISPENSATION FROM SUNDAY MASS OBLIGATION

March 13, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I greet you during this season of Lent in the name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and I give thanks everyday to the Triune God for your faith and love for the Church.

Each day, we are learning more about the COVID-19/coronavirus and are amazed how it spread globally. In our own country, ongoing efforts are made to keep us safe. Even as we remain vigilant about hand washing and the use of hand sanitizers and observe social distancing, further precautions are necessary.

Upon consultation, I have decided and decreed that it is prudent and necessary to dispense Catholics in the Diocese of Winona-Rochester from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until Monday of Holy Week, April 6, 2020. At that time, a further dispensation may be necessary, if the COVID-19/coronavirus is still spreading. This is a fluid, evolving situation that may call for further guidance and directives in the coming days and weeks.

Masses will continue to be celebrated in our parishes, but God's faithful people are not obligated to attend if they determine there is risk to themselves or others. Priests and Deacons will continue to be available to you for sacramental and pastoral needs.

For all of us, Sunday remains a holy day and the day of the Resurrection. Catholics are encouraged to observe the Lord's Day e.g. by making a "spiritual communion" if they are able to watch Mass online at <https://www.dowr.org>, or on television. The Diocese of Winona-Rochester TV Mass broadcast schedule is below.

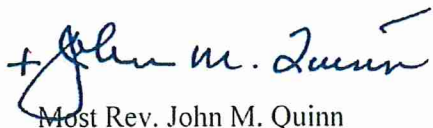
- HBC Cable Channel 20 (Southeastern MN) Sunday at 3:00pm and Wednesday at 3:30pm
- KAAL Channel 6 (Rochester-Austin-Mason City) Sunday at 9:00am
- KEYC Channel 12 (Mankato) Sunday at 7:30am
- KEYC-DT, Digital Channel 12.2 or Charter Channel 19 (Mankato) Sunday at 9:30am
- KPTH Channel 44 (Sioux City) Sunday at 8:30am
- KTTW Channel 7 (Sioux Falls) Sunday at 7:00am
- WKBT Channel 8 (Winona-LaCrosse-Eau Claire) Sunday at 7:30am

In addition to the Sunday obligation, you may decide to attend Mass on a weekday when assemblies are smaller. Those attending Mass any time should continue to minimize the risk of contracting or spreading infection. For details, see <https://www.health.state.mn.us/>.

I ask for solidarity in prayer this Lent for the sick and especially for those with the COVID-19 virus, along with their caregivers and the first responders who are at risk. Lent allows us time especially on Fridays, as a community to do acts of charity and penance, fasting and almsgiving and the opportunity for intimate prayer with the Triune God. In particular, I ask all the faithful to be attentive to those in need, such as residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, by reaching out by phone or mail. I also ask you to set aside time for intense prayer and fasting on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, the Commemoration of St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ is with us and His victory over sin and death cannot be reversed. He is our true and lasting security. I give thanks for each of you. Blessed are you!

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John M. Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. John M. Quinn
Bishop of Winona-Rochester