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My dear people of God,

In a continuing response to the recent pandemic, Bishop Daniel Thomas and his brother bishops in Ohio, have:

After serious consideration of the grave health risk involved in public gatherings and in order to curb the spread of the Coronavirus, the bishops of Ohio have decided, **effective immediately**, to suspend temporarily all publicly celebrated Masses/liturgies, at least through the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter. The bishops of Ohio dispense the Catholic faithful who reside in their respective dioceses and all other Catholics currently in Ohio from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass through Easter Sunday.

This follows Bishop Thomas' concerns for the faithful in his 12 March 2020 letter. I reiterate that he mentioned that we should "devote some time to prayer on the Lord's Day... to watch/listen to a broadcast of Sunday Mass via television, radio or internet/streaming and to make a spiritual communion." This now applies to all of us. Additionally, in the service of clarity, all events in our parish will be canceled effective immediately through the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter. I am consulting with my brother priests as to the best way to still offer confession and the sacraments to those in imminent danger of death. In short, now is the time to stay home.

In the Parishes of St. Joseph and Most Pure Heart of Mary, I will continue to celebrate Mass for the intentions that have been requested and published in the bulletin, for the health and well being of all of you, and for an end to this pandemic which is plaguing our times.

I fervently implore all parishioners of the necessity of prayer in this time and of the perpetual and indispensable obligation to build one's relationship with God. As I stated in my homily this weekend, we are all going to die, eventually. This is not time to grow lukewarm or cold in our faith. This is a time to grow stronger in our relationship with the Lord. As midwestern Catholics in Lent, none of the tasks that lie ahead of us are unfamiliar, they are just unchosen by us individually. Being "snowed in," not eating exactly what we want when we want to eat it, in general going without (especially to ensure others have enough), increasing our prayer, fasting and almsgiving (I suggest that we look at our social distancing as a way to be charitable to those at risk and health care providers). We know how to do this. Let's put our discipline into action.

I would again invite everyone to join me in praying the litany for our particular time of need, even daily. Through the intercession of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and St. Joseph, her spouse, let us pray *for* each other, even if we may not be praying with each other physically,

Rev. Christopher Mileski