



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS

5825 SHELBY OAKS DRIVE
MEMPHIS, TN 38134 901-373-1200

DECREE

In light of the great importance of the holy Mass and our need for Holy Communion, it is with great sadness that I must acknowledge that the current threat of the coronavirus has made it dangerous for many people, especially the elderly, to attend holy Mass on Sunday. With this in mind and motivated by a desire for the safety of all the faithful, I hereby dispense all the faithful of the Diocese of Memphis from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. This dispensation is effective immediately and will remain in force until further notice. I also instruct pastors to suspend the celebration of all public Masses until further notice.

I exhort the faithful of the Diocese to be mindful of the love that we should have for the Sunday Mass and to cultivate a longing for the Eucharist. St. John Paul II reminded us that “[t]he Church draws her life from the Eucharist” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 1) and the Second Vatican Council taught us that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.” By our participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice we give fitting worship to God and draw life from Christ to build up the Church. So I pray that one day soon we may be able to gather together again to celebrate the Eucharistic banquet.

Please remember that the priests of our Diocese are celebrating Mass without a congregation for all the faithful of Memphis and for the entire Church. We must lift each other up in prayer during this time of fear and suffering, confident that Christ has overcome death and has given us new life through his Gospel (see 2 Timothy 1:10). His Holy Spirit is with us at all times and will give us the strength to persevere in these difficult times.

Given at the Seat of the Diocese of Memphis in Tennessee on March 16, 2020.



+ *David P. Talley*

Most Reverend David P. Talley, M.S.W., J.C.D.
Bishop of Memphis in Tennessee

Fr. James Clark
Very Reverend James M. Clark, J.C.L.
Chancellor

I will give you a new heart Ezekiel 36:26