



DIOCESE OF STEUBENVILLE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2020

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Ohio bishops suspend all Masses through Easter

STEUBENVILLE — After serious consideration of the grave health risk involved in public gatherings and in order to curb the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), the bishops of Ohio, including Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, 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.

The bishops said this decision was not taken lightly and caused them great sadness. However, after consultation with the governor and health officials they are convinced that this is the most prudent and necessary action.

Science has proven that participation in public gatherings significantly increases the risk of contagion. This poses a serious danger to those especially most vulnerable.

Bishop Monforton asked all priests in the diocese to make every effort possible to keep the churches open for private prayer.

The bishops said Sunday remains a holy day, and they encourage the faithful to pray as a family or individually the rosary, Divine Mercy chaplet, the Liturgy of the Hours, Stations of the Cross, etc. They also urge everyone to participate in prayer by way of radio broadcast or televised or livestreamed Mass.

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