



## DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

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April 15, 2020

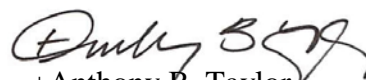
To the people of the Diocese of Little Rock,

I want you to know that I appreciate what a difficult time this has been for all of us, especially the suspension of public Masses and all other public gatherings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I think we have all grown in our love for and longing for the Eucharist. I know this has been very hard for our priests, who miss intensely the joy of celebrating the Eucharist with the community, and even more so for you in the laity who must participate in the Mass through the internet or on TV, if that. And of course, there is everything connected with COVID-19 itself: the illness, the deaths, the loss of jobs and income, the isolation, the closing of schools, etc. I am convinced that the Lord will use this adversity to bring us many blessings, even if we can't always see it at the time. Hopefully drawing us closer to himself, helping us to see more clearly what is really important and perhaps reassessing our priorities going forward. I hope that the increased time spent together will strengthen the bonds within our families and that time spent in prayer together become a source of spiritual growth.

As I am sure many of you will recall, on March 12 I promulgated required changes for the rest of March and the entire month of April in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the temporary suspension of all public Masses and previously scheduled Confirmation ceremonies plus the cancellation or postponement of all non-essential gatherings in your parishes pending further notice. I also indicated that on April 15 I would make a determination regarding activities in the month of May. Well, we have now reached April 15 and the COVID-19 cases have not even peaked yet in Arkansas. According to our public health officials, physical separation needs to continue to be maintained for the time being, so **I am extending our present suspension of activities (and the corresponding dispensation of the Sunday obligation) to May 18**. On April 30 I will make a further determination regarding the remainder of the month of May, including whether an earlier opening date might also be possible if things have changed for the better between now and then. May 31 is Pentecost; let us pray that by then the conditions will be right for us to resume normal activities.

In the meantime, let us pray for those who are ill and those who have died, for those searching for a cure and for medical caregivers who risk their own health to care for others, for those who are faced with unexpected financial difficulties and for those who due to age or underlying medical problems know themselves to be especially vulnerable.

Sincerely in Christ,

  
+Anthony B. Taylor  
Bishop of Little Rock