



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

November 20, 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Christ the King and Advent approaches, please accept my pastoral greetings and concern for you, the good Faithful in the Diocese of Venice. My prayer is that the preparation for the Lord's coming in the Advent Season will enliven our hope in the promises of Christ.

Allow me to update you regarding Masses as the Covid-19 Pandemic continues to impact the Diocese and all of us. In my October 9, 2020 letter, it was said that the General Dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass would remain in effect until November 28, 2020, and perhaps longer. Considering the present circumstances of the virus spread, the General Dispensation is extended into the New Year and I will advise regarding its conclusion at a future date.

There are some optimistic signs and there are increasing numbers of the Faithful returning to Church for Sunday Mass. Also, there is greater weekday attendance. Please continue to make every reasonable effort to return to in-person worship if you are able. With gratitude, I acknowledge all who have returned and commend those who continue to join the live streaming of Mass due to vulnerabilities and those who care for them. Further, let us all keep in prayer our brothers and sisters who have had the virus and their families.

As Christmas and the New Year approach, it is crucial to maintain vigilance regarding safety precautions in Parishes. This will necessitate scaling back special Feast Day celebrations and holiday related events. Unfortunately, it cannot be as it was in the past. Particularly, I underscore the need for the wearing of masks, maintaining appropriate distances, as well as cleaning and sanitizing measures. Parishes have been encouraged to schedule more Masses for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day than is customary. Having additional Masses, perhaps at different times or in different locations (Parish hall or gymnasium), will safely accommodate the potential numbers of Faithful who may attend Mass for Christmas.

At this challenging time, let us be united in prayer as we journey through the Advent Season in preparation for the Birth of Our Lord and Savior. Be assured of my prayers for you and your family!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida

FJD/nml