

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BISHOP SCHARFENBERGER ANNOUNCES CESSATION OF PUBLIC MASSES DURING CORONAVIRUS THREAT

(Buffalo, NY) – Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger announces that **there will be no regularly scheduled public Masses in the Diocese of Buffalo until further notice** due to an abundance of caution and growing concerns about the spread of the novel coronavirus. Churches may remain open, as locally feasible, and the faithful are encouraged to continue to visit and pray while maintaining a prudent distance from one another. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention today updated its guidelines with the instruction to cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more for the next 8 weeks: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>

On Friday, Bishop Scharfenberger announced that all Catholic faithful are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligations. A full list of parishes that offer live-streamed Masses can be found at: <https://www.wnycatholic.org/news/article/featured/2020/03/13/103900/bishop-scharfenberger-dispenses-catholics-from-sunday-and-holy-day-mass-obligation-due-to-coronavirus-threat>

In addition, all other parish events and large gatherings are to be postponed, including Confirmations. Funerals will continue to be conducted, though with only immediate family present until further notice. All Catholic schools will remain closed until April 20, 2020. Additional information about schools and home study instruction will be made available at: <https://www.wnycatholicschools.org/>

“As the faith community of Western New York, we have an important part to play in protecting those most vulnerable and those with underlying medical issues during this period of extreme concern over the spread of the coronavirus,” said Bishop Scharfenberger. “I realize how deeply disappointing it is during our season of Lent to refrain from gathering at public Masses and participating together in our liturgical life, but we must avoid the risk of wider infection. I encourage the faithful to pray fervently during this time when we must be apart and to continue their Lenten journey within families and in the quiet of their own prayerful reflection, knowing that Christ abides with us always and in every place.”

The Diocese of Buffalo will continue to provide regular updates on the impact of the coronavirus threat on Catholic life and Diocesan operations.