

**DIOCESE OF BATHURST**  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP



**March 18 2020**

**COMMUNIQUE**

Dear brothers and sisters,

As you know, we are currently living in difficult times due to the Coronavirus pandemic. So far, our diocese seems to be weathering well, unlike other regions around the world. Thank God. This does not exempt us, however, from taking all the necessary precautions to be prepared to face a possible epidemic that could arise in our territory at any time. That is why I ask you to follow the preventive measures issued by our government.

Doing so will naturally lead us to modify certain aspects of our Church life and will require some sacrifices on our part. After consulting with fellow bishops and the priests of the diocese, I share with you some measures effective in our parishes from now on, and until further notice:

Sunday and weekday Masses, as well as any other religious parish gathering or not (such as bingo, brunch, etc.), are canceled. The priests will of course continue to celebrate their daily Mass for you and in communion with you, but privately. With regard to baptisms, weddings and funerals, we will advise families to postpone the celebration if possible and clearly explaining to them the reasons for such a postponement. If this option is not retained, they will be offered a celebration with only the immediate family.

As for catechism classes, we will always follow the directives in place for the education sector. As for Holy Week, we will give you more information shortly, but you can imagine that it will be lived differently this year.

As I mentioned to you in a previous communique, the Church is a mother who takes care of her children and comforts them when they need her most. This is why, during these difficult times, the churches will remain open as a sign of hope, especially during normal Sunday Mass hours and other usual times. You can then come to reflect and collect your thoughts, recite Pope Francis' special prayer invoking the Virgin Mary, meditate on the Word of God, recite the rosary, do the Stations of the Cross, take a moment of worship or light candles. The priests who are your pastors will of course be available to celebrate with you on request the sacrament of forgiveness and that of the sick.

Deprived of our usual celebrations, I invite you to live a spiritual communion by participating in the Eucharist, through a broadcasted Mass celebration on television or on the internet (KTO and Salt and Light for example ). "Living with Christ" will also offer the Sunday readings on its website. "Living with Christ" booklets, as well as parish bulletins, will be made available to you at the entrance to your churches.

During trying times, families stick together and seek to remain united. The same goes for our family of Faith, which is the Church. I will therefore keep in touch with you through our website, our Facebook page or through the radio, in order that we may nourish our faith together and remain in communion with each other.

We are currently living a fairly special Lent which will deepen a sacramental hunger in us, but will also makes us realize the how fortunate we are to have received the gift of faith and to know with certainty that Christ, our pastor and our good shepherd, is always there by our side to console, strengthen and love us. May Mary, our mother, also shower you with all her love.

Fraternally yours in Jesus Christ,

+ Daniel Jodoin,  
Your Bishop

**Please see Pope Francis' Prayer to Mary for Coronavirus below**

Diocese of Bathurst

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## **Coronavirus: Pope Francis' Prayer to Mary**

In a short prayer broadcast this Wednesday, March 11, Pope Francis entrusts "Rome, Italy and the world" to the Virgin Mary. Faced with the Coronavirus epidemic, he asked the Blessed Virgin for protection, "as a sign of salvation and hope".

*O Mary,  
you shine continuously on our journey  
as a sign of salvation and hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.  
At the foot of the Cross  
you participated in Jesus' pain,  
with steadfast faith.*

*You, Salvation of our People,  
know what we need.  
We are certain that you will provide,  
so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee,  
joy and feasting might return  
after this moment of trial.*

*Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform ourselves to the Father's will  
and to do what Jesus tells us:  
He who took our sufferings upon Himself,  
and bore our sorrows  
to bring us, through the Cross,  
to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.*

*We seek refuge under your protection,  
O Holy Mother of God.  
Do not despise our pleas –  
we who are put to the test –  
and deliver us from every danger,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin.*