

## Pastoral Response Letter from Father Jon Thorsen 3/13/20

“Blessed are those who trust in the LORD; the LORD will be their trust” (Jeremiah 17:7). Fear is gripping the world in regards to the Coronavirus, and while prudence dictates we exercise caution, panic and fear are spiritual movements that are not of God. This is a time to turn trustingly to the Lord in prayer. God always brings a greater good out of evil.

Some have expressed concern about whether they should be attending Mass. For now, Masses are not being cancelled. However, Bishop Ricken has granted a dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass for all the faithful in the Diocese of Green Bay for the next 3 weekends, March 15, 22, and 29. I want to remind people that staying home from Church events is an obligation in charity for those who are sick with a contagious disease.

The CDC describes those who are at a heightened risk in this way:

“Early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Lung disease

...If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease”

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>).

Please exercise your best judgement about whether you will attend Mass these coming weekends. There are several opportunities to watch or listen to the Mass from home. We are currently exploring our capabilities of streaming the Mass live at Good Shepherd through our Facebook page. Let us call upon the Lord of all faithfulness and on the motherly protection of Blessed Mary our Mother in this challenging time! God bless you all!

*Fr. Jon Thorsen*