

# Message from the Bishop to the Diocese of Fond du Lac

March 16, 2020

## Covid-19 Suspending in Person Public Worship

In response to the latest directives from the CDC (no gatherings larger than 50) and the White House (no gatherings larger than 10) we will be suspending in person public worship in the Diocese of Fond du Lac until further notice. I also urge you not to meet in person unless absolutely necessary.

This is not a decision I take lightly. As I wrote in my statement last Friday, in an outbreak of serious infectious disease as we are experiencing, loving our neighbor means keeping our distance. In that way we hope to “flatten the curve”. It is about balancing our need to gather for worship over against our need to love our neighbor and not spread the disease.

I know this will make many aspects of worship and ministry difficult. Along with the Task Force of healthcare experts I announced on Friday, I am also forming sub-groups to help gather ideas and resources for doing worship, pastoral care, and faith formation during this time while it is inadvisable to meet together.

For those congregations not equipped to live stream or otherwise post their own worship at this time, I will be live streaming worship for Grace, Sheboygan this Sunday at 10:15. You can access that by [clicking here](#)

St. Thomas, Menasha live streams their worship. Click [here](#) for access.

Intercession-Beloved Community, Stevens Point also live streams their worship by way of Facebook [click here](#)

It may well be that your church will be doing so as well

I will also be posting, this Saturday, a video Lenten Retreat on Julian of Norwich who lived in a time of pandemic, political unrest, and other uncertainty yet found peace and hope in spite of that. More details on how to access the video will be posted on the diocesan website soon.

I will also be mailing a letter to each member of the diocese this week. It will contain information about Covid-19 and where things stand in our diocese.

In the meantime, here is a quote that I find reassuring:

"He who is anxious and knows Christ may be assured that he is not alone in his anxiety, but that Christ, too, has gone through it. And this means a completely new attitude toward the future; no longer is the future a befogged landscape into which I peer anxiously because all kinds of obscure perils are brewing there for me. No, everything is changed: we do not know what is coming, but we know \*who\* is coming. And he who possesses the last hour no longer needs to fear the next minute."

– Helmut Thielicke (1908-1986), 'On Being Afraid of Life' in 'Christ and the Meaning of Life'



And here is a prayer:

My Jesus,  
I believe that You  
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things,  
and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment  
receive You sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You.  
Amen.— Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787)

Under the mercy,

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Gunter  
VIII Bishop of Fond du Lac.