



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIOCESE**  
**OF CHARLESTON**  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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April 7, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The past few weeks have been unusually difficult. We are all trying to balance the many aspects of our lives with little physical contact with our friends, extended family and Church community. I, too, am feeling the challenges associated with the coronavirus pandemic. However, we must remain home and physically distant so we can defeat this virus and return to our normal lives.

During his daily COVID-19 press conference on Monday, April 6, Governor Henry McMaster announced that churches may hold outdoor services on Easter Sunday if they choose to and as long as the congregants practice social distance. After discerning whether or not this should take place, I have decided that we will not offer outdoor Masses on Sunday. As your Bishop, I am obligated to care for your soul and, with this airborne virus sickening so many people and claiming so many lives, I feel obligated to care for your wellbeing, too. Offering outdoor Masses will put your health in danger as well as that of our priests and those who will assist with the celebrations of the liturgies. I cannot in good conscience put any person in a position that could result in them contracting this deadly virus. We need to take every measure possible to protect people from COVID-19, by not putting their health in jeopardy.

The Diocese, as well as several parishes across South Carolina, will stream Masses for the remainder of Holy Week. You can learn more about this at [charlestdiocese.org/covid-19-response](https://charlestdiocese.org/covid-19-response). Please gather with your family and participate in these Masses together.

Although COVID-19 has shaken our lives, it cannot shake our faith. As we prepare for Easter, let us continue to pray for all who are ill due or have passed away due to COVID-19, and for those health care professionals who are on the front lines during this crisis. Let us also pray for an end to this deadly virus

In the Lord's Peace,

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmone  
*Bishop of Charleston*