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Catholics in Lexington Diocese Dispensed From Sunday Mass Obligation as Part of Epidemic Response

LEXINGTON — In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and with particular concern for vulnerable people, Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv., has granted a dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation for Catholics in the Diocese of Lexington for the weekend of March 14-15. Weekend Masses will still be celebrated, but Catholics are not obligated to attend.

“This decision was not taken lightly, as the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of the life of the Church. And especially at moments of deep concern for the common good, people of faith turn more deeply to prayer and the support that communities of faith provide,” said Bishop Stowe. “We are in communication with public health officials, and the risks of large gatherings as a means of spreading this virus are real. This is why the diocese has already adopted measures urging avoidance of contact with others at our liturgies.”

Pastors should encourage those who are ill or have symptoms to stay home as an act of charity to their fellow parishioners, and vulnerable people, especially those over the age of 60, are encouraged to stay home. Those wishing to follow Sunday Mass from their homes can do so via Facebook livestream courtesy of the Cathedral of Christ the King in Lexington this Sunday at 9 a.m. (www.facebook.com/ctklexky)

Daily Masses, which are not as heavily attended as Sunday Masses, will also continue to be offered. Catholic churches are also encouraged to provide opportunities for handwashing at every Mass location. As the COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly changing situation, the diocese will provide further updates as needed.

The diocese’s epidemic response is available online at: www.cdlex.org/diocese-of-lexington-epidemic-response