April 17, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The coronavirus pandemic continues to prevent us from gathering for previously scheduled celebrations of the sacraments as well as our regular participation in liturgies in our parish churches. Our hunger for the Eucharist and for public worship is intensifying. Please know that my staff and I continue to monitor closely the current situation.

In the meantime, local parish activity includes our intensified prayer for the end of this pandemic, for the healing of those who are afflicted with this dreadful virus, our health care workers, public safety workers and all those providing essential services. We pray for those, particularly the most vulnerable, who fear for their health. We plead to God on behalf of those who have lost their jobs and for our students. Every one of us, as prayer warriors, must take up our arms, literally lifting them up in supplication to the Lord in this monstrous battle against the coronavirus.

As you know, we have delayed the celebrations of the Chrism Mass, Confirmations and Ordinations, as well as the celebrations of the Sacraments of Initiation for catechumens and candidates who have been participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults programs in our parishes. The virtues of prudence and patience dictate that these delays continue until health professionals advise that the established guidelines such as appropriate social distancing can be relaxed.

The planned ordination of two deacons as priests and two seminarians as deacons has been postponed from May 30 to August 1. We pray that the ordinations of these men can be a public celebration at that time. This will be a truly graced occasion in which we desire that all those who wish can gather at our cathedral to celebrate our faith and to thank God for the gift of the lives of these men in the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Despite the delays in these celebrations, we continue to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. We may be separated due to the health crisis, but we are united in the Body of Christ. You and your loved ones remain in my prayers. Thank you for continuing to pray with us through the social media opportunities provided. I am so grateful to our parish priests who, utilizing creative means, provide you with the spiritual support and pastoral presence that is crucial, especially during times like these in which we live today. Please contact them should you or a neighbor have particular needs that he might address. I want to thank you for continuing to support your parish through Sunday envelopes or special donations as your parish relies on your generous support.

Loving Mother, Health of the Sick and Cause of our Joy, keep us in the embrace of your arms and help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus our Lord. AMEN.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg