



THE RT. REV. STEVEN ANDREW MILLER, D. D.

---

BISHOP OF MILWAUKEE

April 2, 2020

To the Clergy and People of the Diocese of Milwaukee

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace to you and peace in this week when we draw near to the holiest days of our Christian faith. This year we will recall the events of Holy Week through a lens we could not have imagined. Like Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, we wish and long for something different – take this cup from us. And yet like Jesus, our prayer must be not my will but thine be done.

I write you again today as your bishop, chief pastor and canonical overseer, as promised. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of my decision to extend the pastoral direction that clergy and churches of the Diocese of Milwaukee suspend public worship until at least May 1. On April 27, I will reassess this situation in light of developments and give directions for the future. This directive applies to all our congregations, clergy and licensed lay ministers.

What I wrote to you last month remains true, “it pains me to make this decision but I believe it is for the best of all. Loving our neighbor requires giving up for the sake of others.” I wish we would have been able to open our churches for Holy Week and Easter. Unfortunately, this is not the case. It is even possible that it might be necessary to extend this directive into June and perhaps even longer.

Like many of you, my days are now spent in Zoom conferences, webinars, and phone calls. It is a very different way to do ministry. What has not changed is the comfort I find in the daily offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, which has been the anchor of my prayer life for over forty years. I am pleased to see so many of our congregations gathering for the Daily Office through the internet. Many of my colleagues have remarked that the Office is said with more frequency than at any time we can remember. Just as important are the ways that we are reaching out to one another in both new and familiar ways. We are staying connected in new ways — online Bible studies, coffee hours, book studies, prayer groups — while continuing to use tried and true methods such as phone trees and personal phone calls. I dare say we are more connected to one another in real-time than ever before. Theologically, we are never unconnected because we have been joined to one another in Christ through baptism. These gatherings manifest that truth at a time we need to remember it the most.

Please know of my prayers for you all as this pandemic continues to unfold. If you would like me to pray for friends and loved ones who are working on the front lines of this pandemic,

please send their names to me at [bishop11@diomil.org](mailto:bishop11@diomil.org), and I will add their name to my list. I ask you to pray for me as I seek to minister faithfully at this time. Pray for all our clergy and people.

Grace to you and peace.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven Andrew Miller". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

The Rt. Rev. Steven Andrew Miller  
Bishop