



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



March 17, 2020
Feast of Saint Patrick

Dear Members of the Saint John Paul II Shepherds' Guild,

As you are well-aware the current pandemic of the COVID-19 virus has placed challenges upon the Church in the Diocese of Fort Worth to carry out its mission entrusted to Her by Christ. This includes daily discernment and ongoing communication with local and county authorities regarding the celebration of Mass and the appropriate administration of the sacraments. Most especially before us is the Church's responsibility to proclaim authentic Christian hope in place of fear and panic. We live as a people of hope when we act prudently and are mindful in solidarity and charity of those who will be more easily overlooked.

With that in mind, I am asking that members of the Guild participate in the ordination of the six transitional deacons by following the live streaming of the liturgy March 19, 2020 at 6 p.m. on our Diocese's website: www.fwdioc.org. The ordination will be celebrated more simply at St. Patrick's Cathedral in the presence of a smaller number of family members and participants within the requirements of safe social distancing and under the capacity limit of 125 people set by the City of Fort Worth.

I consulted with priests, staff, and the six men to be ordained and have made the decision to proceed with the ordination. I considered other options with the candidates for ordination including postponing the ordination until later. Each of them articulated to me the clear desire and resolve to be ordained in a subdued ceremony on March 19, 2020, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph so that the ordination can serve as a sign of hope to the Diocese of Fort Worth and that they might be of more service to the faithful at this time of pandemic. God has blessed us with their vocations.

Please be assured of my prayers as I thank you for your prayers. I urge you to keep courage and be mindful of the best way to prevent contagion while carrying out our Christian responsibilities of love of neighbor. Christ will see us through these times. I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA
Bishop of Fort Worth

THE CATHOLIC CENTER