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Bishop Persico calls for bells to ring; releases Prayer in Time of Pandemic

Bells will ring out and a new prayer will be offered across the Diocese of Erie on Easter Sunday at noon. The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie, is asking that all Catholics in the diocese offer the prayer daily at the noon, and that all parishes ring their bells each Sunday at noon through the Easter season, which lasts until Pentecost, Sunday, May 31.

“This initiative is a reminder to the community that we have hope in the resurrection,” Bishop Persico said. “For centuries, bells have called people together to pray. During this time when we cannot gather, they can still remind us to put ourselves in God’s presence, call us to prayer and help us focus as we worship.”

The Prayer in Time of Pandemic asks for strength, comfort, protection and wisdom.

“Console us in our uncertainty and fear. Unite us in hope, enlighten us in faith,” it says. “Give us the grace as a Church to love one another as You have loved us.”

Bishop Persico noted that everyone has experienced a particularly trying Lent this year.

“With all of the tragedy and anxiety of the past weeks, we know the experience of Lent and Good Friday in a deeper way,” he said.

“We are united with the suffering Christ. But we know, too, that Good Friday led to Easter. As Christians, even as we are living

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ANNE-MARIE WELSH
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1167
Cell 814.746.6889
amwelsh@ErieRCD.org

MARY SOLBERG
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1171
Cell 814.969.1844
msolberg@ErieRCD.org



in the midst of this worldwide pandemic, we have hope in the message of the resurrection. We believe a new day, a future with hope and the joy of new life will come.”

Bishop Persico also said he is asking for bells to ring each Sunday at noon because it is the Lord’s day.

“It reminds us at the beginning of each week to make sure we are walking in the presence of Christ,” he said, “and even though we are apart physically, we are united spiritually.”

Prayer in Time of Pandemic

Lord Jesus,

You came to bring salvation to our world.

You humbled yourself to accept death on a cross.

Be with us as we confront the spread of the coronavirus with courage and hope.

Be present to the sick and to those who accompany them in their suffering.

Strengthen our medical professionals and caregivers;

comfort families who are separated from one another.

Protect those who are at risk of the virus in their work.

Grant wisdom to our civic officials and perseverance to scientists.

Spare us from the ravages of this illness and console us in our uncertainty and fear.

Unite us in hope, enlighten us in faith,

and give us the grace as a Church to love one another as You have loved us.

Through the intercession of our Heavenly Mother,

we make this prayer as we place our trust in You.

Amen.

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The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL

Bishop of Erie

A downloadable version of the prayer will be available to the public at www.ErieRCD.org beginning later today.