

## **Benedictine Sisters of Cullman, Alabama Response to COVID-19 Coronavirus**

March 17, 2020

The Prioress and Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery have followed the news regarding the COVID-19 coronavirus closely and prayerfully. As women of prayer and as a monastic community that cares deeply for our neighbors near and far, we are especially mindful of those suffering from this virus, the medical personnel caring for those affected, and for our civic and religious leaders who must make crucial decisions. We are praying for all those affected, and for an end to this virus outbreak.

In addition to prayerful concern, our community is taking concrete steps in response to the threat posed by this virus. These efforts are an attempt to minimize the spread of this virus and to safeguard our country's medical resources for those in critical need. The measures below are guided by 2 Timothy 1:7: "God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and a sound mind." As Christians, we choose love over fear. We have chosen to take the protective measures below out of our love for each other and our neighbors and out of the prudence of a sound mind.

Our response is as follows:

- Effective March 17, 2020, our Retreat Center and Monastery are closed to all visitors until April 5, 2020. This situation will be reevaluated at that time to determine if an extended period of closure is needed.
- Previously scheduled Retreat Center groups and individual guests have been contacted by Retreat Center staff.
- We have been and will continue to follow the liturgical and ritual directives offered by our diocese in response to the coronavirus. Please see the Diocese of Birmingham's website for the current directives. Our practices will be updated whenever diocesan directives are changed.

It is through our love for others and our faith that we will remain strong during these challenging days ahead. May God bless us and protect us from all harm.