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# Diocese of Buffalo

## Office of Communications



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 25, 2020

### **Statement of Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger Regarding Priest Gathering at St. Leo the Great Parish**

“Concern has been expressed over my decision to allow priests who have been placed on administrative leave or who do not have faculties to celebrate the sacraments publicly to participate in Mass with me and other priests of the Diocese yesterday. This was a private Mass - not open to the public - which had as its emphasis the need for true personal remorse and penance for the harm caused to victim-survivors. I deeply regret that this decision to gather privately in prayer and penance opened the door to yet another wound for those harmed.

“As a family we want to find ways to overcome what fractures us. Sometimes those efforts fall short or fail miserably. We will continue to try even as we learn from our failures and reach out to those wounded and re-wounded.

“I want to emphasize that in no way should the participation of certain priests be seen as a restoration of their faculties to celebrate the sacraments publicly, or certainly not in any way to disregard the grave emotional, physical and spiritual harm inflicted on innocent persons. The well-being and healing of those who have experienced such trauma was and continues to be our constant preoccupation. Here at the start of this season of Lent, I call on all our priests - those in good standing and those not - to reflect on the actions that have damaged souls and severed relationships with God and our Church, to pray intently for the healing of those harmed and to beg forgiveness from the Lord who calls us to repentance and who alone binds our wounds and restores our hope.”

- Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger, Apostolic Administrator