



DIOCESE OF FAIRBANKS

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

13 March 2020

Coronavirus Update and Liturgical Services

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In consideration of the health and well-being of the faithful, I encourage all parishes to implement the following precautions to combat the spread of the corona virus. These guidelines reinforce recommended practices to reduce the transmission of illnesses and are in effect until further notice.

1. Parishioners, if they are ill, or suspect they are ill with a contagious illness, or are concerned that they may become ill by attending Mass, are dispensed of the Sunday Mass obligation. They should remain at home and return to church when they are well.

The Church encourages us to make an act of “spiritual communion,” where we unite ourselves to God through prayer. Please consider devoting an hour to prayer, observing Mass on television/internet/radio, and/or praying a rosary.

2. Ushers are encouraged to open the doors to welcome the faithful at Mass. The door handles should be sanitized after each Mass.
3. Holy Water fonts will be drained and remain empty.
4. Please omit the spontaneous gesture of handholding during the Our Father.
5. At the Sign of Peace, the priest will say: “Peace be with you.” The faithful will respond “And with your spirit.” The practice of exchanging the Sign of Peace among parishioners is suspended.
6. All ministers of Holy Communion should use hand sanitizer prior to the distribution of Holy Communion. Alcohol-based or other appropriate waterless hand sanitizers should be made available on the credence table for such use.
7. Only the priest or deacon should receive the Precious Blood from the Chalice. The Catholic Church teaches that Christ is received, whole and entire, even under only one species.
8. It is strongly recommended that Holy Communion be distributed in the hand of the communicant and not on the tongue. All ministers are advised to distribute the consecrated Hosts with particular care, being cautious, as far as possible, not to touch the communicant.

At this time, we are not cancelling any Masses or Communion Services. The situation is very fluid and additional measures may be necessary as circumstances change.

I will part of a teleconference on Monday, 16 March, with Religious leaders, medical professionals and State of Alaska representatives. After this teleconference an updated letter will be sent out with any further instructions from my office.

Sincerely in Christ,

†Most Reverend Chad W. Zielinski
Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska
Diocese of Fairbanks



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