



DIOCESE OF FAIRBANKS

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

P.N. BCZ 20/06

28 February 2020

Temporary Suspension of the reception of the Precious Blood at Communion

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As a precautionary measure and for the health and safety of all due to the spread of the coronavirus, I am temporarily suspending the reception of the Precious Blood at Communion. Today, 28 February, the Committee for Divine Worship at the USCCB circulated a memo entitled “Liturgical Celebrations and Public Health Concerns.” The advice given to the bishops of the United States is similar to that which was given during the swine flu pandemic in 2009.

After prayerful consideration and with the advice of the USCCB the following precautionary steps are to be taken in the Diocese of Fairbanks, *effective immediately*:

- Priests, deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are reminded to practice good hygiene by washing their hands before Mass and to consider using an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution before and after distribution of Holy Communion;
- If the faithful are sick or experiencing symptoms of illness they are not obliged to attend Mass;
- The faithful should consider refraining from exchanging the sign of peace and limit physical contact; and
- ***For the time being, reception of the Precious Blood at Communion is temporarily suspended.***

I remind the faithful of the diocese that when we receive Holy Communion under one form or the other, that we receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ in its entirety. In addition, while we have an obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, we are not obliged to receive Holy Communion every time we attend the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The faithful are asked to pray for those who have been personally affected by the coronavirus threat throughout the world and to pray for those who are working with the sick or seeking to stem the tide of this infectious disease. Parishes should consider adding petitions to the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass. The USCCB has provided the following sample petitions:

- For those who are suffering in the current outbreak of sickness that they may be healed, and for the happy repose of all who have died from this sickness in recent weeks;
- For scientists, health professionals, public officials, and all who are serving the common good in this difficult and uncertain time, that they will be filled with wisdom and understanding;
- That in times of illness our merciful and loving Father will strengthen our faith in his goodness and divine providence;
- That our compassionate Father would touch all affected by the current outbreak with healing and peace.

Amidst any challenge, sickness or suffering may we unite this to the Passion of Christ, our Lenten focus. In our Lenten almsgiving, may we reach out with assistance to those who are most vulnerable and need a helping hand. May our ongoing prayers unite us more closely with one another and with Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,

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



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