

## GUIDELINES REGARDING MASS

We have been given guidance from the diocese regarding the celebration of Mass and other activities. But first of all: **BASIC COMMON SENSE: If you are sick**, having any symptoms of cold, flu or fever, **STAY HOME**. The obligation to attend Mass is suspended anytime due to illness which includes fear or anxiety about the situation.

**HOWEVER, PRAYER is MOST IMPORTANT.** We began the Lenten Season on Ash Wednesday with the words of the prophet Joel saying Call an assembly, Fast, and Pray that the Lord may be merciful. Let us call upon the Lord in prayer that we may be rid of this disease and fear of it. Consider your activity: Is the Lord first and foremost, or will this be an excuse from praying? You can pray the rosary, read Scripture, spend time in reflection and prayer at home.

### GUIDELINES for Mass:

- People should not hold hands while praying the “Our Father” at Mass.
- The Sign of Peace should be exchanged without any physical contact, for example, by turning to those who are nearest and saying, “Peace be with you,” with a bow of the head towards them.

Regarding the distribution/reception of Holy Communion:

- While it is recommended that distribution of the Precious Blood via the chalice be suspended, it is up to the pastor. (NOTE: I am not suspending it for various reasons: First and foremost, it is the Lord Jesus).

Regarding receiving the Host:

- Those who wish to receive on the tongue, which is very **sanitary when done properly**, should stand still and open mouth wide so the minister can drop host without coming into contact.
- Likewise, those who receive in the hand, should make sure that the hands are open flat so that the host may be placed in the hand without making contact.
- The Ministers of Communion are to refrain from any touch or physical contact of anyone presenting themselves in the communion line.

--Maintenance staff in parishes, schools, and other church buildings will be taking extra precautions to clean and sanitize surfaces, door handles, etc.

--All ministers and employees of the church as well as all the lay faithful are encouraged to follow the basic precautionary guidelines published by the [Centers for Disease Control](#) to avoid the spread of illness.

--Meetings, classes, gatherings, and events may continue as scheduled for now, at the discretion of local leadership and with careful application of the CDC guidelines noted above.

Further, and with the essential mission and ministry of the Church in mind, **the Diocese is calling for the faithful to devote the remaining Lenten Friday fasts for the special intention of healing for those affected by the Coronavirus and for the cease of its spread.**