



Memo

Date: March 2, 2020
To: Clergy, chancery staff, school principals and parish secretaries
From: Maureen Smith, Director, Office of Communications
Re: Coronavirus advisory Feb. 27

The Archdiocese of Atlanta is monitoring the spread of COVID-19, also known as the coronavirus. As of today, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): *“For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.”*

The Georgia Department of Public Health has issued a similar advisory, [available here](#).

Accordingly, parishes, schools and partner organizations do not need to make changes to their usual operating procedures right now. Should this disease become an active concern in Georgia, the Archdiocese of Atlanta will follow the guidance of the CDC and the Georgia Department of Public health in what changes to make and will issue instructions to parishes, schools and partner agencies.

What can you do now?

Given that our communities have time to prepare, this is a good time to review or discuss your local community response plan. Staff members could test remote connections should they need to work from home. Make sure staff are cross-trained on essential work functions. Your organization should update all contact lists and communication plans and you may want to review basic illness prevention tips.

In fact, the prevention measures for Coronavirus are almost identical to those used for flu.

Preventing flu or flu-like illnesses

Our communities can engage in best practices known to prevent the flu and many other contagious illnesses including the practice of frequent hand washing; avoid touching your face or mouth; clean frequently used surfaces including doorknobs, computer keyboards and phones; stay home when you are sick and avoid contact with people who are sick.

The CDC has a webpage with many useful resources on prevention:
<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/index.html>.

Individual pastors may decide to suspend the exchange of peace and/or distribution of the precious blood if they feel flu is widespread in their community.

Further Materials

- For daily updates on COVID19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

- Downloadable posters and handouts you can use in your parish or school:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html>

- Hand washing technique resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

- Downloadable and printable handwashing fact sheets:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/fact-sheets.html>

- Downloadable epidemic, pandemic and outbreak preparedness information from Catholic Mutual:

<https://communique.archatl.com/wp-content/uploads/CARES-Coronavirus-2019.pdf>