



Memo

Date: March 9, 2020

To: Priests, deacons, sisters, chancery staff, partner agencies and parish communicators

From: Most Reverend Joel M. Konzen, SM, Diocesan Administrator

Re: Coronavirus update March 3

Dear Friends in Christ,

We continue to monitor and respond to new reports about COVID-19, also known as the coronavirus. We know last night's revelation of two cases in Georgia will raise concern in our communities.

At this time, we wish to expand our response to protect our parishioners and vulnerable populations. Please either omit the exchange of peace or ask that people not touch one another during the exchange of peace. Please also instruct extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately before distributing Eucharist. We will continue to withhold communion from the chalice for the time being.

We are not issuing a directive eliminating Holy Communion on the tongue at this time, but pastors may want to suggest parishioners receive only in their hands in light of the heightened concern of random transmission and the likelihood that more people will be affected in Georgia.

Finally, encourage your parishioners, staff and students to stay home if they are not feeling well. Flu continues to be a concern in our communities in addition to this new virus. Good hygiene and common sense are our best defenses against the spread of illness in our communities.

We ask you to join in prayer for those who have contracted COVID-19, for healthcare workers and for those who may be vulnerable to illnesses like flu or coronavirus. Continue to encourage your communities to be aware and proactive, but not panic.

In Jesus and Mary,

Most Reverend Joel M. Konzen, S.M.
Diocesan Administrator

Further Materials

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