

**OFFICE OF WORSHIP  
AND THE CATECHUMENATE**



**MEMO**

Date: 12 March 2020  
To: Priests & Deacons  
RE: Further Directions regarding COVID-19  
From: Fr. Martin Dobrzynski *M. J. Dobrzynski*

In response to developing information regarding COVID-19 it has become necessary for us to recommend further precautions to be utilized during Holy Mass. The Office of Worship, with the support of Bishop McClory, is issuing the following enhanced recommendations for your parish. The following revisions are in response to increased concerns about the coronavirus.

- **At the beginning of each Mass, clearly explain:**
  1. If you have a potential illness, you should refrain from attending Mass.
  2. For the well-being of all, we ask parishioners to avoid physical contact (during the Our Father, greetings, sign of peace\*).
  3. We are temporarily suspending the offering of the Precious Blood during Eucharist.\*\*

\*It might be helpful to once again explain to the congregation that they simply turn to their neighbor and with a nod of their head offer the sign of peace with the words only.

\*\*Some pastors have expressed a desire to offer the Precious Blood on a very limited basis to those who may have severe gluten intolerance. Pastors may exercise discretion to grant a limited exception to such individuals, not to the entire congregation.

Provided in the attached are suggested items to share with parishioners. Please continue to use the Mass intentions previously provided.

We will continue to monitor the CDC, USCCB, state and local health care agencies for COVID-19 protocols and offer updated recommendations and policies regarding the coronavirus.

Let us remember in our prayers health care workers who are striving to control and eradicate this virus, as well as those who have been affected by it. Thank you for your continued care of the local Church.

## Recommendations Regarding Public Safety and Liturgical Practices

- **Consider including these reminders on your parish website, parish bulletin, announcements, email and social media**
  1. If you have a weak immune system or are compromised by age or potential illness, you should refrain from attending Mass.
  2. If you cannot participate in the Sunday Eucharist, you are dispensed from the obligation to attend and do not incur a mortal sin.
  3. At home you are encouraged to pray and reflect with the Sunday readings and if possible to view the Mass on television.
  4. Mass from Mercy Home in Chicago is broadcast at 9:30 a.m. (CST), on WGN each Sunday
  
- **Continue to post Healthcare Basics in prominent locations in the church and parish offices:**
  1. The CDC recommends washing hands regularly or using alcohol-based hand gels when washing hands is not immediately possible.
  2. Use the inside of your elbow to cover your mouth if you need to sneeze or cough.
  3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  4. Use effective cleaning methods to keep surfaces germ-free.