

Memorandum

TO: Clergy and all Parishes

FROM: Deacon Modesto Cordero, Director
Office of Worship

DATE: March 3, 2020

RE: Cold and flu season and the **COVID-19** (Coronavirus outbreak) **Update**

This is an update MEMO to the prior January 31, 2020 “Cold and Flu season and the Coronavirus outbreak” MEMO issued by my office.

As we continue to receive news and reports of the spreading of COVID-19 (coronavirus) around the world and on our nation, concerns and request for guidance among the faithful in our parishes is increasing. We are aware that many of you have already taken proper steps to maintain the calm among our parishioners and have in place preventive measures to avoid the potential spread of the virus in our parishes and diocese. Many dioceses around the nation have also taken proper steps to keep and foster a safe worship environment.

In our diocese we haven’t set specific restrictions to the normal pattern for the Order of Mass or Holy Communion. However, we continue to remind each pastor that local pastoral discretion and care should be practiced as necessary. The following are some measures we can all take to assist with keeping the spreading of the virus:

1. Temporary suspension of the distribution of the Precious Blood to the congregation. However, if you have individuals in your parish who have Celiac disease and can only receive Communion from the cup, a simple means of allowing them to receive from the cup should be planned.
2. The faithful should be encouraged (though not mandated) to receive Communion in their hands, and not on their tongue.
3. Also encourage the faithful to not hold hands during the reciting of the Our Father.
4. For the rite of peace, ask your parishioners to offer each other a smile or a bow of the head, or to simply say the words “**Peace be with you**” during the exchange of peace.
5. Maintain clean, fresh holy water and holy water fonts and/or empty the holy water containers at the church door.
6. Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands before Mass begins and after distributing Holy Communion to the faithful.

7. Check and fill hand-soap dispensers in all of the restrooms of the church. You might also place a large dispenser of hand sanitizer in your church vestibule.
8. Frequently sanitize those surfaces in the church that are touched frequently.

It is important to continue reminding the faithful that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not apply to those who are ill, especially those who suffer from a contagious disease. It is a sign of consideration for themselves and others that those with flu-like symptoms remain at home.

Below are examples of prayers of the faithful you can add to your Lenten liturgies. Please feel free to contact me at the Office of Worship, 808-585-3342 or email at mcordero@rcchawaii.org should you have any questions.

Lenten Blessings!

Prayers of the Faithful at Mass

- For those who are suffering in the current outbreak of sickness that they might be healed, and for the happy repose of all who have died from this sickness in recent weeks; let us pray to the Lord
- 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; let us pray to the Lord
- That in times of illness our merciful and loving Father will strengthen our faith and trust in his goodness and divine providence; let us pray to the Lord
- That our compassionate Father would touch all affected by the current outbreak with healing and peace; let us pray to the Lord