

Office of Worship

Diocese of Honolulu

Memorandum

TO: Clergy, Parishes and Diocesan Staff

FROM: Deacon Modesto Cordero, Director
Office of Worship

DATE: March 12, 2020

RE: Cold and flu season and the **COVID-19** (Novel Coronavirus) **Update #2**

This is an update #2 memorandum to the prior ones issued by my office. Current information from the Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) reports that there are two presumptive positive cases of coronavirus in Hawaii. The risk of contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) in Hawaii **remains low**. Good hygiene and general flu precautions are suggested for prevention.

With the growing concern of the spread of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in Hawaii and around the world, institutions are putting in place preventative measures to limit the spread of the virus locally. Following recommendations from local public health officials, the diocese has decided that, at this time, **there will be NO cancellation of Masses (daily and weekend Masses will continue as scheduled until further notice)**. If the elderly want to go to Mass, they should not be prevented from doing so. We do understand the seriousness of the coronavirus, but we also have to have faith that the Lord will look after his people. If people are sick, they should feel free to miss Mass.

The following are additional guidelines to those already provided in the prior memorandums (until further notice):

- Priests who are concelebrating at Masses should receive Communion by intinction.
- As a spiritual response, priests can offer a Mass for the Sick (“For Various Occasions” #45) or a Mass for Any Need (“For Various Occasions” # 48). These Masses may not replace the Lenten Sunday Mass. These Masses can unite the priest and the faithful to those who are sick and petition God for a reprieve from the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Parishioners are encouraged to pray the prayer below throughout the Diocese of Honolulu – both individually and whenever they gather during this current crisis.
- The faithful are instructed that if they are experiencing any signs of an illness that could be contagious, they should stay home for their own welfare and the safety of others. Although the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation is serious, staying home under these circumstances is certainly a legitimate reason to be dispensed from the obligation.

- A parishioner who feels well but who has a reasonable fear of contracting illness can be excused from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass at the judgment of the pastor.
- The sign of peace can continue verbally without physical interaction.
- Please do your best not to touch the person when s/he approaches for Holy Communion (i.e. the hand at distribution; the head/shoulder for those who are not receiving).
- If an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is uncomfortable with distributing Holy Communion at this time, s/he can be excused from this ministry.
- After the necessary purification of the sacred vessels by the priest or deacon, the sacristans should wash the vessels with soap and water and dry them with a non-abrasive towel. [This should be a normal practice after every Mass, and not only during this time of crisis.]
- On Good Friday this year, the Cross will be venerated by a bow or genuflection, not by touching or kissing.
- Consideration might also be given to our Lenten penance services. It is recommended that confessions be heard in well-ventilated areas rather than in the confessional and small rooms.
- Any priest who becomes ill should contact the Office of Clergy to find a substitute for Masses. In an extreme or emergency situation when finding another priest is not possible, the Mass should be cancelled, and people who would otherwise attend are dispensed from the obligation.

Pastors and/or parish administrators may cancel non-essential activities after consultation with respective diocesan officials and following recommendations of local authorities.

The Diocese has developed this webpage for quick access to resources that includes information from reliable and professional sources: www.catholichawaii.org/covid19.

DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
PRAYER FOR THE COVID-19 CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC
[by Bishop Larry Silva; March 12, 2020]

Dear God of all the living, you sent your Son Jesus to heal us from illness and sin. We turn to his healing power in this time of anxiety over the pandemic of this potentially deadly virus.

St. Damien and St. Marianne Cope dedicated their lives to service of those who had an infectious disease. St. Marianne Cope said, "I am not afraid of any disease," because she was confident of your power to save. At the same time, she took prudent precautions of hygiene to assure that she and her Sisters would not be infected.

Let us learn from this example to put our trust in you to save us from the ravages of disease and to take prudent measures to prevent its spread. Guide us to know when to isolate ourselves from the possibility of infection, but never let anyone be left without the care and concern of others in the community.

As our Diocese of Honolulu has been dedicated to the Divine Mercy, we pray with confidence, "Jesus, I trust in you."

In addition, here is a translation of the prayer Pope Francis recited by video on March 11 asking the Blessed Virgin Mary to protect Italy and the world during of the coronavirus pandemic.

*O Mary,
you always shine on our path
as a sign of salvation and of hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.
You, Salvation of the Roman People,
know what we need,
and we are sure you will provide
so that, as in Cana of Galilee,
we may return to joy and to feasting
after this time of trial.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform to the will of the Father
and to do as we are told by Jesus,
who has taken upon himself our sufferings
and carried our sorrows
to lead us, through the cross,
to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.*

*Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God.
Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial,
but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin*

Additional Resources:

- Hawaii State Department of Transportation <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/coronavirus/>
- Hawaii Department of Health <https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/>
- Centers for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

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.

Our Lady of Peace, patroness of the Diocese of Honolulu, pray for us!

Lenten Blessings!