



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

March 12, 2020

Dear Religious Education/Faith Formation Leaders,

Grace and peace to you!

Please refer to the **guidelines for parish ministries** in response to COVID-19 which were approved by Bishop Larry Silva yesterday afternoon. As of this writing, Bishop Silva **has not** required religious education/faith formation programs to be suspended nor local events be canceled. The diocesan staff is following this issue closely and will notify pastors immediately should Bishop Silva issue a new directive. Remember to include me in your parish's deliberations regarding altering religious education/faith formation program schedules.

The Diocese has developed a webpage for quick access to official diocesan communications and recommended resources: www.catholichawaii.org/covid19.

As you read the guidelines, ensure your parish is following them and has put a plan in place to prevent and/or stop the spread of the novel coronavirus.

When communicating with parents, please exercise responsible leadership. Work in collaboration with your pastor and other parish ministries to minimize confusion. Focus on facts, avoiding language that prompts fear. Information should include:

- That you are praying for them and are concerned for the welfare of all;
- Steps you are taking to prevent the spread of the virus (student/staff handwashing routines, disinfecting commonly used surfaces, etc.);
- Symptoms which indicate that they/their child should not attend religious education gatherings and how long they should remain at home (refer to CDC guidelines in the memo).

Pro-active measures:

1. Discuss how the parish will institute (if necessary) procedures as indicated in Section 2 of the memo.
2. Update the contact list of your families. If they must self-isolate or are quarantined, it is important that you, or members of your team, continue to reach out to them regularly to let them know of your prayers and that they are not forgotten.
3. (Re)familiarize families with the beautiful prayer traditions of our Church in the event students cannot attend class. These would include (but are not limited) to:
 - a. Liturgy of the Hours – to encourage families to join in prayer with the universal/global church and to be filled with grace and hope in Christ throughout the day.

- b. The Holy Rosary – imploring Our Lady of Peace to pray for and protect us in the name of her Son.
 - c. Divine Mercy Chaplet – The Diocese of Honolulu has been dedicated to the Divine Mercy. Pray with confidence, “Jesus, I trust in you.”
- 4. Research online resources provided by the publishers of your religion text books – contact your publisher sales representative for assistance if needed. *Remember that parents are stressed during these times so expecting them to teach a “class” to their child may be asking a lot. Encourage seeking comfort in God through family prayer and acts of Christian discipleship – living the gospel!*
- 5. Research other online resources for adults/parents that are centered on the daily/Sunday Mass readings such as: Bishop Barron: Word On Fire www.wordonfire.org; Three-Minute Retreat: www.loyolapress.com; CatholicMom www.catholicmom.com; etc. I’m sure you have your favorite Catholic websites, music, and books that speak to the needs of your families.

I will provide you with updates as they are made available. May God grant you good health and grace in abundance!

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