



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIocese OF LAS CRUCES**

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**Bishop Baldacchino issues guidelines to help prevent the spread of the Coronavirus**

The Diocese of Las Cruces offers the following guidelines that parishes may decide to implement to help prevent the spreading of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-2019). These are the same precautions taken to avoid the spread of the Flu as New Mexico is listed by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as having widespread flu outbreaks and high influenza-like illness (ILI) activity. There are also reports of two suspected cases of Coronavirus Disease in Juarez, Mexico. The following guidelines are suggested:

- Temporary suspension of the minor chalices used for the distribution of the Precious Blood.
- Temporary suspension of the communal Sign of Peace (kissing or shaking of hands).
- Not to hold hands during the recitation/changing of the Our Father.
- Temporary suspension of the greeting before Mass (if your parish has this practice).
- Emptying the holy water fonts at the church doors.
- Use of anti-bacterial soap by the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion before and after distribution of the Host.
- Reminding parishioners that if they feel unwell or have flu-like symptoms they are encouraged to stay at home.
- The celebrant is to use discretion if he shakes hands while greeting parishioners before or after the Mass.

As the distribution of Holy Communion involves contact with both the mouth and hands, any Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion who feels uncomfortable distributing Communion should be allowed to temporarily step down from ministry.

It is still left to the discretion of the communicant how they wish to receive the Host. Please note that it may be good to notify them that receiving Holy Communion in the hand and not on the tongue is preferred to limit the exposure of being exposed to the Coronavirus Disease.



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If circumstances should change in the coming days and weeks that require a different course of action, further information or measures will be forthcoming.

Please visit the CDC website for the latest updates on the Coronavirus Disease: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.**

**Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**

**Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.**

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.**

**Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.**

**Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.**

**Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**



For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

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