



**DEPARTMENT FOR CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

**CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH**  
Secretariat for Catholic Education and Evangelization

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Dear Parents/Guardians, Leaders, and Volunteers,

As people of faith, in times of uncertainty, our first response is to pray for guidance and grace to meet the challenges of the day. In responding to the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), we join communities from around the world who are working through the same challenge. In times of uncertainty we must focus on the steps we can take. Working together and helping one another we place our confidence in God.

**The Diocese of Pittsburgh considers the health and well-being of our children and youth, leaders, volunteers and communities to be of the utmost importance.** We continue to monitor the updates about the Coronavirus and have been preparing our response under the guidance of the Allegheny County Health Department, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If you would like to access up-to-date information about COVID-19, go to the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health's website at [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov).

**Measures Pertaining to Parishes**

As the situation regarding COVID-19 is ever-changing, we are committed to providing regular communications to our families and community. You can find current releases and announcements at [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org). At this point, we wish to inform you of those measures that have been enacted for the wellbeing of our parishes:

- **Priority of the sacraments:** The Eucharist, especially on Sunday, and the sacraments will always be at the heart of our belief and the faithful need to have access to them to the greatest extent possible. Until further notice, First Communion and Confirmation will proceed as planned.
- **Priority of student formation:** Educating children is essential. We will continue, to the extent possible, to keep our schools, faith formation/youth ministry programs open but will close programs should it become necessary. Those families who are not comfortable sending their children to faith formation are welcome to homeschool. We are happy to provide needed materials in support of those families wishing to do so.
- **Eucharistic reception:** Reception of the Eucharist by cup has been suspended at Mass until further notice. This suspension pertains to First Holy Communion as well.
- **Hygiene:** Parishes, schools and Catholic organizations are to follow the directives of health agencies on hygiene, cleaning of facilities, and other health directives.

- **Large gatherings:** Nonessential diocesan-level gatherings of 50 or more people are cancelled starting on Monday, March 16, 2020. Parishes, schools and Catholic organizations are encouraged to assess the need for large gatherings as well.

**For this reason, regrettably, “Arise”, our youth gathering scheduled to take place on Saturday, March 28 at Stage AE, will be cancelled with the intent to reschedule at a later time.**

### **Preventative Hygiene**

In accord with the directives of the Centers for Disease Control, we remind our leaders, volunteers, children and youth, to observe the following preventative hygiene measures. Any specific health concerns should be directed to your family physician.

- Thoroughly wash hands as often as possible.
- Cough/sneeze in the elbow and not the hand.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Stay at home / keep children at home when sick, for a minimum of 72 hours after fever and other symptoms subside.
- If you or your child have had *actual* or *potential* exposure to COVID-19—follow all health regulations including reporting illness and restricting social contamination, and when required self-quarantine for 14 days. Consult parish administration before returning to faith formation or youth ministry.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. We know that times as these can be distressing, but we must remember our Lord’s parting gift to us: peace.

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” John 14: 27.*

Sincerely in Christ,

Judene Indovina, Director of Catholic Identity  
Gary Roney, Director of Youth and Young Adult Outreach