

Church of St. Albert

Response to COVID-19 Coronavirus

The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and our parish have been following concerns about the spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus. While there is a great deal of information circulating about this virus, the biggest concern is that it spreads relatively easily and poses a serious threat to some members of our community. To slow the spread of the virus and reduce the number of people affected, we will observe the following guidelines for Mass:

- As always, **if you feel sick or have flu-like symptoms, please stay home.** You are relieved of your Sunday obligation if you are ill or caring for someone who is ill.
- Before Mass, please **greet each other without touching.**
- The **Sign of Peace** during Mass will be temporarily **suspended.**
- **Only the priest will receive the Precious Blood from the Chalice** as is necessary for validity of the Mass.
- Please refrain from hand-holding during the Our Father.
- The **Holy Water fonts** will be temporarily **emptied.**
- **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are reminded to sanitize their hands before and after distribution of the Eucharist.**

In addition to these guidelines, **we strongly discourage you from receiving Holy Communion on the tongue until the spread of the virus is contained.** We realize this is a deeply personal decision for people, and we cannot require anyone to receive in the hand or on the tongue. We would ask you to keep in mind two considerations:

- Hands are readily sanitized, but mouths are not. Accidental contact with a communicant's mouth or tongue immediately affects the communicant, the minister and everyone who receives Communion afterward.
- There is not a single, proper way to receive, so it is reasonable to consider an alternative as a temporary sacrifice for the good of the community. Both methods of receiving Holy Communion have been supported by priests, bishops, popes and saints throughout the history of the Church.

Some may regard the threat of this virus as overblown. Please consider that these guidelines and recommendations are not about you, individually, but about protecting those among us who are most vulnerable and ensuring that we can continue to worship together.

Thank you for observing these guidelines. Please pray for those who are sick and for a swift end to this outbreak.