



MEMORANDUM

TO: Priests and Pastoral Leaders

FROM: Office of the Bishop

DATE: March 13, 2020

RE: Coronavirus outbreak

As friends and followers of Jesus, we are committed to remaining positive and preventative during this COVID-19 outbreak. In addition to lifting the requirement to attend Sunday Mass and other measures such as no distribution of the Precious Blood, we offer these additional directives with regard to the celebration of the liturgy and caring for others:

- All baptismal and Holy Water fonts must be drained.
- Because of the possibility of direct contact with saliva in the distribution of Holy Communion on the tongue, the faithful are urged to receive Holy Communion reverently in open hands for the time being.
- Any priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion **with any symptoms of illness** are asked to refrain from distributing Communion. The use of an alcohol based antibacterial hand sanitizer before and after distributing Holy Communion continues to be advised.
- Precautions are encouraged regarding offertory baskets that are passed by hand and hospitality gatherings such as coffee and donuts. **Any gatherings outside of Mass with more than 250 people are recommended to be cancelled per Wisconsin State Guidelines**  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/covid-19.html> (Scroll to Large Community Events & Mass Gatherings)
- To prevent the spread of COVID-19, priests, deacons, care ministers, and extraordinary Ministers of Communion, should not be visiting the homebound, hospitals and nursing homes, except in emergency situations. Parish minister are encouraged to check-in on the sick and elderly via phone or other indirect ways such as dropping care packages at their doors.
- Priests, deacons and all parish ministers, including parish staff, parish ministers and volunteers who travel outside of the United States to countries with Level 3 travel restrictions by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **must self-quarantine for 14 days prior to beginning public ministry.**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- The CDC also advises that **all travelers to any destination** should self-monitor health and practice social distancing, which includes: avoiding crowded places, group gatherings and maintaining a six-foot distance from others for 14 days upon return. <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/coronavirus-global>

These directives will remain in place until further notice. The diocesan task force on COVID-19 is meeting daily to address this fluid situation. If you have any questions, please contact Shaun Johnson, Divine Worship Director at 920-272-8311 or [sjohnson@gbdioc.org](mailto:sjohnson@gbdioc.org); Father Luke Ferris, Vicar for Clergy and Pastoral Leaders at 920-272-8165 or [lferris@gbdioc.org](mailto:lferris@gbdioc.org); Father Dan Felton, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia at 920-272-8180 or [dfelton@gbdioc.org](mailto:dfelton@gbdioc.org).