

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 28, 2020

Dear Monsignors and Fathers,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As you have likely heard on national and local media, the Covid-19 coronavirus is a serious, contagious respiratory illness that can easily spread from person to person. It originated in China and cases have now been reported in other countries including Italy, Hong Kong, Canada, France, Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States and Vietnam. Coronavirus symptoms resemble typical flu symptoms and include fever, cough and shortness of breath.

While the U.S. has experienced minimal coronavirus cases to date, I ask you to exercise special precautions during the celebration of the Mass and implement protocols at parish functions to minimize the potential for coronavirus and flu spread and to educate on how to avoid exposure. For example, guidance could be offered by way of announcements and/or signs. Alcohol-based anti-bacterial solution or wipes could be made available at entrances.

Based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), please remind your parishioners to:

- 1) Cover coughs/sneezes, throwing away used tissues.
- 2) Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.
- 3) Avoid shaking hands, and clean hands often.
- 4) Do not share personal items. Take care not share to dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and hot water.

In deference to points three and four above, I strongly encourage you not to extend the Sign of Peace, distribute Holy Communion from the chalice or otherwise invite people to extend a greeting at Mass or other gatherings.

All those who distribute Holy Communion should wash their hands before Mass begins. As a further precaution they may clean their hands again by using an alcohol-based

antibacterial solution before distributing Holy Communion. After distributing Holy Communion, they should purify their fingers using an ablution cup, and then may proceed to use the alcohol-based anti-bacterial solution again.


Also, please let parishioners know that they are legitimately excused from Mass if symptoms are present or have any reason to suspect that they have been exposed to the virus. They could be encouraged to watch live-streamed Sunday Masses online, Masses broadcast on EWTN (www.ewtn.com), or recorded homilies/Masses offered on your websites.

The CDC expects coronavirus cases to increase in the U.S. in the coming weeks and asks organizations to begin responsible planning to minimize the likelihood of infection and related disruption. I am grateful for your attention to these important matters.

For additional information regarding the coronavirus, please visit the CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

You may use this letter or parts of it on your parish website or bulletin.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis
Bishop of Charlotte