



IMMACULATE HEART^{OF} MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR MARCH 15, 2020

Dear friends in the Lord,

The Archdiocese has been receiving guidance regularly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other public health agencies regarding the response to COVID-19. In each instance we at IHM have implemented the recommended procedures immediately—for example, additional cleaning to disinfect frequently-touched surfaces around the church and school, suspension of the sign of peace and Holy Communion from the chalice at Mass, and the emptying of the baptismal font.

More recently we have asked Mass-goers not to receive Holy Communion on the tongue. I realize that this is a more difficult accommodation for some, but the science is not difficult to grasp. In fact it is hard to imagine a more efficient method of transmission of illness than for saliva from one communicant's tongue to be placed on the finger of a minister and then directly onto the tongue of another communicant. I am grateful that almost all of those affected by this temporary change have been happy to do whatever they can to promote the common good and maintain public health during the present crisis.

At this point in the Coronavirus outbreak, it should be evident, but it bears repeating: Anyone who feels ill or experiences flu-like symptoms should not attend Mass or any other parish activity. The danger of infecting others represents a sufficient reason not to attend Sunday Mass and it nullifies the Sunday obligation.

Jesus Christ,
healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.
Be with those who are infected with Coronavirus
and with the families of those who are sick and of those who have died.
Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals
who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process.
Be with the leaders of all nations,
and give them the foresight to act with charity for the well-being of the people they serve.
Whether we are home or abroad,
Lord, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare.
In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.
Jesus Christ, heal us.