



Archdiocese of Winnipeg

Office of the Archbishop

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MEMORANUM

To: All Parishes
All Clergy

From: Archbishop Gagnon

Date: March 13, 2020

Re: Update - Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Having consulted the deaneries throughout the Archdiocese and after discussions with the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, in light of the current concerns about the risk of infection from the Coronavirus, the following liturgical protocols will be effective in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg beginning today. These protocols will be in effect until such time as we determine that we can return to our regular liturgical practices. Parishioners should be reminded of these protocols on more than one occasion.

a) **For the Sign of Peace:**

- The customary handshake will be replaced with a bow of the head.

b) **For the Reception of Communion:**

- Communion from the Chalice is to be discontinued.
- It is strongly recommended to receive Holy Communion only in the hand.

c) **Holy Water Fonts**

- Holy Water Fonts are to be sanitized and left empty.

d) **Reconciliation Services**

- Penance services are not forbidden but the priest and the penitent should allow some distance between them while maintaining the privacy of the celebration of the sacrament. In lieu of a penitential service time could be allotted for hearing confessions prior to all Masses leading up to Easter.

e) **Hospital Visits with the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum**

- Priests are reminded to wash and sanitize their hands before and after the celebration of the Sacrament. This also applies to Parishioners bringing Holy Communion to the sick.

In addition, parishioners with flu-like symptoms should absent themselves from the celebration of the Sunday Liturgy. Those who have been recently travelling outside Canada (within the last two weeks) are asked to absent themselves from the celebration of Sunday Liturgy for two weeks.

The worship space and sacristy is to be kept clean and sanitary (if disinfectant spray is available it is to be used). Fresh linens should be used at every Mass. Clergy and Ministers of Holy Communion must sanitize their hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion

All parishes should have a team prepared to conduct a Sunday Liturgy of the Word in the event of their priest's illness or isolation.

The everyday activities that can reduce exposure to the virus and protect public health remain:

- o Washing your hands often with soap and water
- o Sneeze or cough into your sleeve
- o Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- o Staying home when you are sick

We will continue to monitor Manitoba Health for any further necessary changes.

Please continue to pray for those who are infected by the Coronavirus.