



REVEREND DANIEL B. CARSON

VICAR GENERAL AND MODERATOR OF THE CURIA

Dear Brother Priest,

The purpose of this communication is to address the concern of the (COVID19), which is a fluid situation, and it is important to pay attention to the most recent information and public health announcements. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the current risk to the U.S. public is considered low at this time, but ultimately, we should be prepared to respond to any current concerns and to future needs if the coronavirus arrives in our archdiocese.

The Archdiocesan Pastoral Center has received some requests for guidance about parish liturgies in light of the public concern currently being expressed about the coronavirus, as well as other strains of the flu virus and respiratory syncytial (RSV) that occurs at this time of year. Most inquiries are in regard to the Sign of Peace, receiving the Blood of Christ from the chalice and receiving the Body of Christ on the tongue.

Pastors may wish to remind their parishioners, in whatever manner is appropriate within Mass, that no one is ever under an obligation to shake hands during the Sign of Peace (a of peace, bow or other gesture is appropriate) or to receive from the chalice. Christ is fully present in each species when the bread and wine have been consecrated into His Body and Blood. Pastors may also wish to remind their parishioners they can receive the Body of Christ in the hand instead of on the tongue. It is up to the discretion of the Pastor, if there is great alarm at this time, you may also consider discontinuing - temporarily - the practice of offering communion under the form of Precious Blood, as well as to take other precautions you deem necessary.

Further, anyone who is ill, or suspects he or she is ill, should refrain from receiving from the chalice out of good will, or if warranted, refrain from participation in public activities, including Mass. If you need to refrain from Sunday Mass, you are dispensed from the Sunday obligation. Ministers, including sacristans, servers and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist (EMHC), also should be reminded to practice good hand hygiene. It may be practical and prudent to have hand sanitizer available in a discreet location near the sanctuary for the EMHCs to use before and after the distribution of communion.

We are continually monitoring the situation with an interdisciplinary team, including health professionals. We will inform you if further guidance on precautions should be considered. For more information on the coronavirus from the CDC and for links to health department resources, please see the resource pages [linked here](#). The Catholic Schools Office has also issued guidance to our schools to be shared with staff, parents and students. Additionally, the Office of Catechesis will be sending a guidance and best practices resource to parish catechetical leaders this afternoon.

If you have any questions, please contact my office at 301-853-4523 or carsond@adw.org.

With gratitude for your service, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Reverend Daniel B. Carson

Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia