



STATEMENT REGARDING COVID-19 (Coronavirus) UPDATE #1

March 13, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The news reports regarding the spread of the COVID-19 virus continue noting that the World Health Organization has described COVID-19 as a pandemic. The Diocese continues to monitor the situation and is updating the March 6th Statement as follows:

Handwashing – One of the most effective means to prevent the spread of viruses is frequent and thorough handwashing. If hand sanitizers are available for purchase, they will be at the entrances of Churches, Halls and Parish Offices. Parish Priests and Pastoral Ministers should be especially attentive to regular handwashing, particularly between Masses or before and after visiting the sick.

Cleaning - Cleaning of high traffic public spaces in Churches, parish offices and parish halls will follow regular cleaning and disinfecting procedures and schedules.

Sign of Peace – “In the dioceses of Canada, the sign of peace is given by a handshake or a bow.” (GIRM, 82.) **At this time, Pastors shall advise their Parishioners to exchange the Sign of Peace by a bow and a greeting of “Peace of Christ” or another appropriate greeting.** The Sign of Peace is not to be omitted from the celebration of the Eucharist.

Ushering and Greeting – **Ushers and greeters shall refrain from shaking hands. A simple bow, smile, and/or greeting of “welcome” will be used in place of the handshake.**

Reception of Holy Communion – The option to receive Holy Communion in the hand, or on the tongue, is up to the Communicant. During a viral outbreak people may wish to receive Holy Communion in the hand, but they are not to be denied if they choose to receive on the tongue.

Communion from the Chalice – Christ is fully present in each species. **At this time, Communion from the Chalice will be suspended.**

Extraordinary Ministers of Communion - Extraordinary Ministers of Communion who feel uncomfortable distributing Communion will be excused from this ministry.

Communion for the Sick - For those who bring Communion to the sick in Health Care Institutions, please follow the directions of the Institution you are visiting.

Holy Water Fonts at the Doors of Parishes and Baptismal Fonts - Baptismal and Holy Water fonts are to be emptied and thoroughly sanitized.

The obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not apply to those who are ill, especially those who suffer from a contagious illness. **Those with flu-like symptoms should remain at home in order not to spread the virus to others. Parishioners who have travelled outside of Canada may wish to access this information link <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html#f>.**

Resources for spiritual communion and prayers will be posted on the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough website. Please check the website for updates.

<https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/index.aspx>

Let us pray for all those who are impacted by illness, for their families and care-givers.

Yours in Christ,

†Most Reverend Daniel J. Miehms
Bishop of Peterborough

POPE FRANCIS OFFERS A PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FOR PROTECTION FROM COVID-19

"O Mary, you shine continuously along our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the Cross was near to the pain of Jesus, keeping your faith firm.

You, Salvation of the Roman people, know what we need, and we trust that you will provide for those needs so that, as at Cana of Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us, He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and took up our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Through Christ our Lord, Amen."