



DIocese OF LAFAYETTE

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

March 4, 2020

All Priests and Deacons
Diocese of Lafayette

Dear Monsignors, Fathers, Deacons:

In view of the fact that there are confirmed cases of the Coronavirus in the United States, I hereby issue the following directives for all Churches in the Diocese of Lafayette.

1. The faithful should not attend Mass or other services/gatherings if they have symptoms of illness (respiratory symptoms—coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath, and/or a temperature above 100°F). They should be reminded that it is not sinful to miss Mass when one is sick (CCC no. 2181). Remaining at home under these circumstances is an act of charity.
2. All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to sanitize their hands immediately before and immediately after distributing Holy Communion, preferably outside of the sanctuary. Pastors should make alcohol-based sanitizers available.
3. All Ministers should be diligent to avoid unnecessary hand contact whether Communion is distributed on the tongue or on the hand. When blessings are offered during distribution of Holy Communion, the Minister is to avoid physical contact.
4. It is recommended that the faithful receive Holy Communion in the hand. However, Holy Communion on the tongue is not to be refused.
5. Holy Communion shall be offered to the faithful only under the form of the consecrated bread.
6. At the judgment of the Pastor, the greeting of peace may be omitted or substituted with a reverent nod or bow of the head.
7. The practice of holding hands during the Our Father is discouraged.

These directives shall remain in effect until the current health cautions are ended. We continue to monitor the situation in contact with civil authorities. If the situation worsens, further restrictions may become necessary.

I ask that you encourage the faithful to remember all affected by this virus in the recitation of the rosary (individually and as families). Let us also pray for an end to this crisis through the intercession of Saint Joseph, Protector of the Universal Church, as we anticipate the beginning of the Year of Saint Joseph on March 19th. With every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, D.D.
Bishop of Lafayette

JDD:mhb