



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

13 March 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

After consulting with my advisors, including the Presbyteral Council, I have decided to mandate the following actions for all in the Diocese of Sioux City. The following events are cancelled:

- All Deanery Holy Hours and meetings
- Women's Conference on March 28th
- Chrism Mass on April 2nd including the Priest Appreciation Lunch at Holy Spirit
- Men's Conference on April 4th

Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

I am dispensing all Catholics over age 65 and anyone, regardless of age, with underlying medical issues, from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Anyone who sincerely or seriously believes they are at risk or is not feeling well is also dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass.

Celebration of Mass

Pastors are mandated to follow these directives:

- Remove holy water from hand fonts and provide hand sanitizer at church entrances.
- Greeters should refrain from shaking hands or touching parishioners and should not hand out bulletins or other materials. These materials may be placed at the doors to be taken
- Remove missalettes, hymnals, papers, and other loose materials from the pews. If missalettes and hymnals are distributed at the door, those should also be removed.
- Remind the lay faithful, if possible, to sit with some distance between one another.
- Take the collection in such a way that eliminates handing the basket from person to person.
- Suspend the procession of the offertory gifts and keep them on credence table.
- Do not hold hands during the *Our Father*, as there is no liturgical directive that requires this.

- Eliminate the Sign of Peace, as liturgical norms allow this to be omitted at Mass.
- Re-enforce the practice of hand sanitizing for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
- I strongly recommend that the Host be received in the hand as opposed to on the tongue.
- Suspend the distribution of the Precious Blood during Holy Communion.
- Be particularly mindful of cleansing the vessels used during Mass after each use.
- Refrain from greeting the priest and others after Mass with handshakes or physical contact.
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Additional Recommendations

- Pastors are advised to evaluate all parish activities and determine whether they should be cancelled or postponed.
- Priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to the sick at nursing homes and hospitals should follow the guidelines established by those institutions.
- Communion to the homebound is suspended until further notice.

Thank you for your understanding at this difficult time and know of my prayers for all of you. Please pray in a special way for our elderly and for me and all our priests and deacons.

In this time of need, I invite all the faithful to seek together the maternal intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Your brother in Christ,



Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless
Bishop of Sioux City