

DIOCESE OF VENICE RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS FOR THE FAITHFUL

In response to recent concerns over the spread of the Coronavirus, the Diocese of Venice has prepared guidelines for parishes to help the faithful take steps which promote the the health of all.

The focus of the Diocesan response is on prevention, precautions and prayerful accompaniment of all effected by the Coronavirus. The Diocesan guidelines are based on the advice given by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Florida Department of Health as well as the common-sense practices that the Diocese of Venice communicates annually during flu and cold season.

Bishop Dewane has invited the faithful to pray in solidarity with those who are at risk, all who have become ill, as well as those public health officials and health care workers who are battling the Coronavirus.

For more information on the effort to prevent and contain the Coronavirus the faithful are encouraged to follow the guidance of the **Center for Disease Control and Prevention** <https://www.cdc.gov/>, and the **Florida Department of Health** <http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/01/012420-2019-ncov.article.html> as well as the measures communicated in the parishes of the Diocese of Venice, specifically:

For Individuals

- Individuals ought to follow common-sense measures to avoid the spread of the Coronavirus.
- Stay home if you are feeling sick or your immune system is compromised. If you are sick or at risk, you are permitted to miss Mass.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often using soap and water, especially after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or using the bathroom. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers if you do not have access to soap and water.
- Consider receiving Communion in the hand, rather than on the tongue.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often.

Precautions in Our Churches

- Attention ought to be given to helping those who are at greater risk to avoid contact which might lead to contracting the Coronavirus.
- We have been instructed by the Diocese to temporarily suspend the distribution of Communion under both species, allow only for the Body of Christ to be distributed.
- People are encouraged to receive communion in the hand during this period. Please remember that the General Instruction of the Roman Missal indicates, “The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant” (160). Since some Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion have expressed hesitation regarding distribution of Communion on the tongue, if a member of the Faithful wishes to receive Communion in this manner, it is recommended that they present themselves only to a Priest rather than an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.
- The faithful are asked to refrain from shaking hands or making other physical contact during the Sign of Peace and not to hold hands during the recitation of the Our Father.
- The Baptismal Font and Holy Water Fonts will be temporarily emptied.
- Hand Sanitizer will be available for those who administer Holy Communion and other ministers who interact closely with the faithful.