

Diocese of Richmond

March 11, 2020

Dear Brother Priests,

We continue to carefully monitor and adjust our preparedness for the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Diocese of Richmond and its impact throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Over the past two weeks, our Diocesan Offices of Worship, Schools, and Communications have shared recommendations to help prevent and limit transmission of the virus.

In light of the growing concern and out of an abundance of caution, and for those places which have not yet begun this practice, I am instructing all parishes, schools, elderly housing facilities, and campus ministries to take the following measures for the foreseeable future:

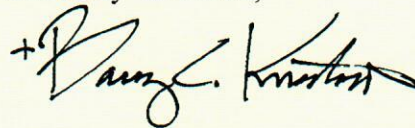
- Cease distribution of the Precious Blood (Christ is fully present under both species of the Blessed Sacrament)
- Refrain from shaking hands during the Sign of Peace (bow or verbal gesture is appropriate).
- Refrain from holding hands during the Lord's Prayer.
- Remove Holy Water from the Baptismal and Holy Water fonts.

Additional information about our diocesan efforts can be found and will be frequently updated at www.richmonddiocese.org/coronavirus. Further resources are available from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and [Virginia Department of Health](#).

Prayer is an important way Catholics respond to any crisis as we express our dependence on God. We stand in solidarity with all those impacted by the disease and ask parishioners to keep these people in mind while we pray – especially as we continue our Lenten journey.

With my gratitude for your ministry and assurance of my prayers, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond