

**PLEASE READ!**

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The Coronavirus has had a profound effect on our lives---globally, nationally, and locally. Many institutions, universities, sports teams, dioceses, annual meetings, conventions, etc., have canceled various gatherings to prevent the possible spread/introduction of COVID-19.

We have made accommodations here in our church as to the Masses--no contact at the Sign of Peace and NO DISTRIBUTION OF THE CUP. These are precautionary measures on our part. Better to "err on the side of caution."

With that in mind, a decision has been made to CANCEL THE TWO SCHEDULED FISH FRY EVENINGS ON MARCH 27 and APRIL 3. This was a joint decision made by myself, Mrs. Alexander, and PTG Board members after much discussion and consultation from Health/Food Safety experts. Our primary concern is for the teachers/staff and students. With the Fish Fry held in our school, there could be the possibility of germs being spread to multiple parts of the school for possible exposure to the Virus. And, with volunteers and patrons from all parts of the area coming to help/eat, again the exposure risk could be high.

This was a VERY DIFFICULT DECISION. Our Fish Fry events have a rich history in this parish and people look forward to them. However, for the safety of all concerned, it was decided to forgo the two evenings this year. I pray that you and others will understand. THANK YOU!





Since the beginning of 2020, the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois has been monitoring developments regarding the Coronavirus, including guidance and information from the Centers for Disease Control, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and other government agencies. We have and will continue to evaluate the practices of our shared faith life across the diocese. Following up on the determinations regarding "Liturgical Celebrations and Public Health Concerns" that were sent to all priests and deacons of our diocese on February 28, 2020, we have decided to provide the following additional clarifications and guidance regarding precautionary efforts to contain the spread of the virus in parishes, schools, and other institutions:

- People should not hold hands while praying the "Our Father" at Mass.
- The Sign of Peace should be exchanged without any physical contact, for example, by turning to those who are nearest and saying, "Peace be with you," with a bow of the head towards them.
- Regarding the distribution and reception of Holy Communion:
  - For the time being, it is recommended that distribution of the Precious Blood via the chalice be suspended. Offering the Precious Blood to all the faithful at every Mass is not required. It is up to the local Pastor or Parochial Administrator to determine whether or not to offer the chalice with the Precious Blood at any given celebration of the Mass in that parish. Reception via the chalice is optional at all Masses, as our Lord is fully present in both species. It is advisable to remind the faithful of this at Masses.
  - Those who wish to receive on the tongue, which is very sanitary when done properly, should stand still and stick out their tongue and the minister will place the host properly without coming into contact.
  - Likewise, those who receive in the hand, should make sure that the hands are open flat so that the host may be placed in the hand without making contact.
- The clergy may consider refraining from shaking hands in greeting crowds after masses and other settings in which it is not possible to practice proper hand-washing and hygienic prevention.
- Those presenting themselves in the communion line and not receiving the Blessed Sacrament should be invited to make a spiritual communion without any physical contact by the minister.
- Maintenance staff in parishes, schools, and other church buildings will be taking extra precautions to clean and sanitize surfaces, door handles, etc.
- Catholic Hospitals and Catholic nursing homes with private chapels will be responsible for deciding whether to continue offering public masses.
- All ministers and employees of the church as well as all the lay faithful are encouraged to follow the basic precautionary guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control to avoid the spread of illness.
- Meetings, classes, gatherings, and events may continue as scheduled for now, at the discretion of local leadership and with careful application of the CDC guidelines noted above.
- Further, and with the essential mission and ministry of the Church in mind, the Diocese is calling for the faithful to devote the remaining Lenten Friday fasts for the special intention of healing for those affected by the Coronavirus and for the cease of its spread.

The Diocese will continue to monitor developments and provide further guidance as needed.