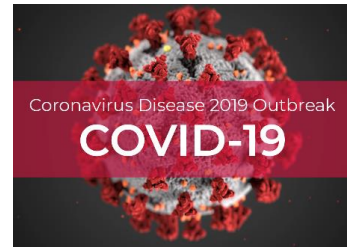


3-13-2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Precautions from Bishop Joseph Hanefeldt



The Diocese of Grand Island offers pastors/parish administrators the following precautions for the public celebration of Mass:

1. Urge individuals with flu-like symptoms of any kind to remain home in order to avoid the spread of their illnesses. In this situation, it is important to note that an individual does not commit any sin by avoiding Mass to protect others from potential spread of illness.
2. Urge everyone to practice good hygiene, washing their hands frequently, use of hand sanitizers, and avoid putting hands to the face.
3. For those who attend Mass, parishes should refrain from the common practice of holding hands during the Our Father.
4. Refrain from shaking hands during the Sign of Peace. Use some other gesture without physical contact. Omit hand-holding during the Our Father. There is no prescribed gesture for the People of God during the Our Father.
5. It is recommended that all holy water fonts be emptied and cleaned.
6. It is recommended that parishes suspend offering the Holy Eucharist under both species. In other words, out of great caution, suspend offering parishioners the Precious Blood of Jesus. It may also be helpful to remind parishioners that the Consecrated Host is the full Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ, meaning an individual does not need to receive from the Cup in order to receive full Communion with Christ.
7. Clergy and extraordinary ministers should not touch those in the communion line who are not receiving Communion.
8. Avoid physical contact. Clergy, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, greeters, ushers, choir members should all avoid handshakes, etc.
9. While we continue to remain vigilant of this situation, please include in your prayers
 - Those who are suffering from the current outbreak of disease, and for those who have died from this disease in recent weeks.
 - Those who provide care to others – those in health care, in homes caring for those who are infirm or dying, for childcare providers, for all emergency workers, to name a few.
 - Priests who assist the sick and dying, that we may extend the love of Christ to those in need.
10. Feel free to create your own prayers to be included in the Universal Prayer.
11. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide further updates and changes as needed.

With assurances of my prayers for all of you, let us exercise our faith and trust in God, live in the hope of God's mercy and love our neighbors as ourselves.



In Christ our hope,
Most Rev. +Joseph G. Hanefeldt
Bishop of Grand Island