

**Archdiocesan Guidelines for Coronavirus**  
**12 March 2020**

Following discussions with archdiocesan leadership and consultation with the St. Louis Department of Health and the CDC, I am now mandating that all parishes within the Archdiocese of St. Louis adhere to the health and safety measures recommended to you last week. I urge you to please address the following with your parishioners at Masses, in your bulletin and on your parish website:

- A parishioner should not come to Mass, church activities or school if they are feeling sick or if their immune system is compromised. It is not a sin to miss Mass when they are sick.
- Remind the elderly, who are among the most vulnerable, that they have the option to participate in the Mass on TV or online via channels such as EWTN, and to request that Holy Communion be brought to their place of residence.
- Sanitize all sacred vessels before and after all Masses. Germs can survive on surfaces for 24 or more hours.
- Suspend the physical exchange of the sign of peace. Use a hand gesture or bow instead. Consider suspending the sign of peace altogether during this time.
- Advise parishioners to keep a distance of three feet from the nearest neighbor when possible.
- Holy Communion distributed by extraordinary ministers will be administered in the hand only. We should strongly recommend that parishioners receive Holy Communion in the hand, however, as this is a celebration of God's love for us and the most important part of our Mass, parishioners who still wish to receive Holy Communion on the tongue should receive from the Mass celebrant only.
- Suspend the distribution of Holy Communion via the chalice.
- No ministers, ordinary or extraordinary, should administer Holy Communion if they have signs of illness.
- All ministers, ordinary and extraordinary, delivering Holy Communion to the elderly, sick or homebound need to be in good health.
- Holy Water fonts should be drained and left empty at this time.
- Encourage the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer which should be placed in highly visible public areas. Remind parishioners of proper cough-and-sneeze etiquette (guidelines are available on the CDC website at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)).
- The latest updates on the coronavirus (COVID-19) as well as all preventative measures can be found on [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).
- The Office of Communications and Planning has created and continues to update a landing page at [archstl.org/coronavirus](http://archstl.org/coronavirus) that will support you in all of your conversations with parishioners about this illness.

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson  
Archbishop of St. Louis