



Archdiocese of San Antonio  
Department of Communication

**March 3, 2020**

## **Archdiocese issues new precautionary guidelines regarding coronavirus for parishes and schools**

In response to the March 2 Declaration of a Public Health Emergency by the Mayor of San Antonio and a similar action taken by the Bexar County Judge, along with advisement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding the coronavirus, the Archdiocese of San Antonio is now recommending precautions in regards to the celebration of the liturgy.

Parishes are requested to temporarily distribute Holy Communion in the hand rather than on the tongue; temporarily discontinue the distribution of the Precious Blood at Mass; remove holy water from fonts at the church doors; and to avoid physical contact would be advisable. Other dioceses in the state and nationally have adopted these temporary measures. As has been stated previously, the archdiocese is closely monitoring the situation, and updates regarding the temporary suspension of these Mass practices will be provided in a timely manner. It is important to note that health and civic authorities maintain that the risk of coronavirus exposure to the public is low.

Pastors have discretion in instituting these directives in their parishes, in light of local needs and protocols. Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS, requests everyone pray for the good health of all people in the world and our communities. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid,” John 14:27.

We also strongly encourage all to follow the simple recommendations from the CDC regarding:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

For Catholic schools, in addition to the steps listed above, cleaning classroom tables and surfaces to sanitize frequently is strongly emphasized. Further discussions regarding future plans are ongoing.

For more information, see <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Health/News/Alerts/CoronaVirus>