



Office of the Bishop

My Dear Brother Priest:

The spread of the new coronavirus into the United States poses a challenge to all of us which demands vigilance, prudence and calm. It also calls us within our worshipping communities to examine whether we need to make some temporary changes in our celebration of the Eucharist.

I am aware that many of our parishes have already taken steps to hinder any potential spread of the virus through parish worship. A number of dioceses have also taken substantive steps to promote health.

After the funeral for Monsignor Shipley, I spoke with the forty priests who were there, including the leadership of the Presbyteral Council. I asked their guidance on taking three possible steps: 1) suspending the sharing of the Precious Blood among the faithful; 2) suspending the shaking of hands at the rite of peace; 3) suspending communion on the tongue.

As a result of this consultation, I am asking all parishes to suspend the sharing of the Precious Blood. I am also asking parishes to take steps toward limiting the distribution of the Eucharist on the tongue, since it is so susceptible to the spread of any illness like coronavirus. As to the rite of peace, I simply ask you to ask your congregations to be prudent during this time of uncertainty.

I also encourage you to do what you can to help our people maintain a sense of reality and perspective on this emerging public health challenge. I have added the attached prayers for healing during our Lenten liturgies, and especially those who are most susceptible.

Grateful for all that you do, especially during this arduous season of Lent which is especially demanding on you, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "R.W. McElroy".

Most Reverend Robert W. McElroy
Bishop of San Diego

Prayers of the Faithful at Mass

- For those who are suffering in the current outbreak of sickness that they might be healed, and for the happy repose of all who have died from this sickness in recent weeks; let us pray to the Lord
- For scientists, health professionals, public officials, and all who are serving the common good in this difficult and uncertain time, that they will be filled with wisdom and understanding; let us pray to the Lord.
- That in times of illness our merciful and loving Father will strengthen our faith and trust in his goodness and divine providence; let us pray to the Lord.
- That our compassionate Father would touch all affected by the current outbreak with healing and peace; let us pray to the Lord.