



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

Prevention and Precautionary Measures in the Diocese of San Diego concerning the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In response to the growing concern relating to the propagation of the COVID-19, we ask the community to adopt the following practices taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as a means to control the proliferation of diseases and infections.

County health authorities stress that it's important for people not to panic, rather to stay informed and do all they can to prevent the potential spread of the new virus, as well as the seasonal influenza.

The Diocese of San Diego is providing this guide to parishes, schools, and families to assist and inform our communities to take the necessary precautionary measures for everyone's well-being. Many of the protocols detailed within should also be practiced during the cold and flu season.

We continue to closely monitor the [San Diego County](#) Health and Human Services agency as well as the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and will adapt these protocols as necessary.

We are also praying in solidarity with those who are ill, public health officials and health care workers.

PREVENTION: What Individuals Can Do

It is incumbent on each individual to proactively follow common sense measures to help prevent the spread of coronavirus and influenza. The following practices were based on the protocols provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

1. Stay home from Mass, church activities and school if you are feeling sick or your immune system is compromised. It is not a sin and it will not affect your grades.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
3. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.
4. Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds using soap and water, especially after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or using the bathroom.
5. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers if you do not have access to soap and water. (Hand sanitizers need to be at least 60% alcohol-based to be effective.)
6. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning products.
7. Follow the recommendations proposed by the [CDC](#) and the [San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency](#).

PRECAUTION: Precautions in our Churches

Bishop McElroy has determined that the following three precautionary measures temporarily take place to avoid contamination or potential spread of the virus.

1. Temporarily suspending the distribution of the Precious Blood, knowing that one receives the fullness of the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Consecrated Host. (Except for individuals who are sensitive to gluten, the person must communicate this to the priest before the beginning of Mass.)
2. Temporarily suspending a physical Sign of Peace, such as a handshake or a hug. Instead, invite parishioners to bow one's head or wave as they offer peace to those around them.
3. Temporarily suspend communion on the tongue. This is to avoid any possibility of contamination. Communion will only be received in the hand.

The following precautions may be used as the Pastor deems prudent:

1. Holy water may be replaced regularly, and fonts should be sanitized each time the water is changed.
2. Extra vigilance should be given to cleaning and disinfecting common areas in the parish, such as door handles, pews and chairs as well as hymnal covers.

3. Hand sanitizers may be available in our churches and schools for guests and employees. (Hand sanitizers need to be at least 60% alcohol-based to be effective).

PRECAUTIONS IN OUR SCHOOLS AND FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMS

We continue to take the necessary precautions to prevent the propagation of diseases, including the COVID-19, across our school and parish campuses. Some of these measures include:

1. Asking that children and employees who have symptoms of respiratory illness to stay home and not come to school or work until they are free of fever (100.4°F [37.8°C], signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of medicines that reduce fever or other symptoms (e.g., cough suppressants).
2. Scheduling regular times throughout the day for children to clean their hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
3. Reminding students about coughing and sneezing etiquette.
4. Routinely cleaning frequently touched surfaces in the school, such as desks, computers, tables and door knobs, and providing disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down before each use.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL AT MASS

The following petitions may be added to the prayers of the faithful in solidarity for the health of our brothers and sisters here and around the world.

1. 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 the sickness in recent weeks; let us pray to the Lord.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. That our compassionate Father would touch all affected by the current outbreak with healing and peace; let us pray to the Lord.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The links below provide further information on COVID-19 from local, state and national agencies:

- [San Diego Health and Services Agency](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [San Diego County Office for Education \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Imperial County Public Health Department](#)
- [2-1-1 San Diego](#)
- [County News Center](#) (General information on COVID-19 and the flu)

Bilingual communications from the Diocese of San Diego:

- [Diocesan Newspaper-The Southern Cross](#)