



# Memorandum

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*Cathedral Square Plaza*

OFFICE OF THE DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATOR

**To: Priests**  
**From: Rev. Donald P. Oleksiak**  
**Date: 19 March 2020**  
**Re: Coronavirus update**

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Happy Feast of St. Joseph!

A few items for your consideration as we continue to move through this unprecedented time with the restrictions caused by the coronavirus. As I mentioned in my homily yesterday, we Catholics are a resilient people and a people of hope. In times of crisis, we come together in prayer as a band of brothers we continue to minister to our people with confidence and hope that God will provide. After all, we have been dealing with crisis from the foundation of the Church. Our leader was crucified. For a brief moment, the Apostles hid in fear. Despite that fear the Lord stood in their midst and said "peace be with you" as the Father has sent me so I send you, and then He breathed on them and said to them "receive the Holy Spirit"(Jn. 19-23). This great gift allowed them to regroup and head out to continue in their ministry. We need to remember that we too have received this great gift of the Holy Spirit. With that, we need to remain calm and confident that we will get through this. Here are a few recommendations and updates that may be of interest to you:

1. Make a call to a brother priest to check to see if he is ok and checking emails for current updates from the Diocese. Ask him if he needs anything, especially our elderly brothers. Many of our priests live alone so a friendly call of support would be most helpful.
2. Talk to other priests about best practices regarding how they are reaching out to their parishioners to do the same. Many have been using parish groups and EMHC's to make calls to parishioners, especially homebound folks.
3. The diocesan senior staff has been working diligently to get information out for health benefits, pensions, unemployment. We need to keep patience, as many of these instructions require compliance with ever changing state and federal statutes.
4. The Foundation staff is working to provide you with some recommendations to communicate with your parishioners as we continue to adjust to the restrictions on Sunday Mass. The absence of the weekly offertory collection is a great source of stress and concern for everyone. We will be providing you with some helpful options to reach out to see who might need help as well as request those who are able to contribute through the mail or direct deposit to help the parish continue to pay their bills.
5. I have received numerous questions and recommendations regarding confessions, distribution of Holy Communion and the celebration of private Mass during the Triduum and Easter. We are working on getting material out to you with some best practices, options and recommendation. Remember this is new for all of us.
6. Education and Catechetical services are working to provide you with helpful tools to continue to teach and promote the faith.

Please remember that the diocesan senior staff is here to help. Please be sure to call the appropriate office before making any employment, financial, or liturgical decisions. Also, please be respectful and compliant with all local, state and federal mandates relative to the current health crisis. The Bishop's office staff and Clergy staff will be calling all of our priests to check in starting with those who are elderly and high risk. Please know that you remain in our prayers. Be faithful to your calling and know that God will provide and see us through these difficult days. You are not alone! Keep an eye out for future update memos as we continue to figure all of this out.