

Praying at Mass While Being Smart about the Novel Corona Virus (Covid-19). Some things you should be aware of or you might notice are a little different these days at church.

BEFORE LEAVING HOME

1. **Ask yourself how are you feeling?** Use common sense, if you are not feeling well you should not come to Mass. If you are genuinely sick you are not obligated to participate in the Sunday Celebration of Mass. You should stay home and rest so as not to risk getting yourself even sicker or spreading germs to others in their church. If you are sick you also should not go out to a mall or movie theatre.
2. **Wash your hands.** Health care professionals are consistent persistent that washing one's hands is the best practice during flu season as well as this period of concern about the Novel Corona Virus.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

ARRIVING AT CHURCH

1. **The smell of disinfectant might be more prevalent especially by the doors of the church.** Parishes have been asked to be more attentive to cleaning the doors and door handles of the parish buildings. Some doors might even be left open that normally are closed to diminish hand contact.
2. **The Holy Water fonts might be empty.** Parishes have been instructed that Holy Water fonts should be emptied and cleaned on a regular basis. No one should feel obligated to use Holy Water upon entering or leaving church. A mindful recognition of entering the Lord's Eucharistic Presence is most important.
3. **People might not extend their hands in greeting.** No one should feel obligated to greet the celebrant (or one another) before or after Mass with a handshake. Eye contact and a simple smile can be even more welcoming than a hurried handshake.

AT MASS

1. **Pay attention to where you place your hands.** Many people place their folded hands on their face or cover their eyes while praying in church. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention instructs that you should avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. This holds true for at church as well as in other public spaces.
2. **The exchange of the Kiss of Peace among the faithful is being discontinued.** The rubric of the Mass states that the priest or deacon should invite the faithful to exchange the sign of peace "if appropriate." At this time, in light of the Novel Coronavirus, the Diocesan Bishop has determined it is not an appropriate time to do so. Therefore, for the time being, after the general greeting "The peace of the Lord be with you always," and

response “And with your spirit” the liturgy should continue with the Breaking of Bread and the “Lamb of God (Agnus Dei).”

3. **Before Holy Communion the ministers might leave the church.** All ministers involved in the distribution of Holy Communion should disinfect their hands before the distribution of Holy Communion with vigorous handwashing with soap for 20 seconds or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
4. **The Precious Blood is not being offered.** The distribution of the Precious Blood from the chalice to the faithful has been suspended within the Diocese during this time.
5. **Everyone is receiving the Host at Holy Communion in the Hand.** It is very strongly encouraged at this time that Holy Communion be received in the hand and not to ask the minister to place it directly onto the tongue. This common sense adaption is to prevent the minister from coming into contact with the individual's mouth and then potentially contaminating the other Communion Hosts. Reverence of the Sacrament is still maintained as the Communicant approaches the Sacrament and bows before receiving the Host.
6. **After Holy Communion the ministers might leave the church.** All ministers involved in the distribution of Holy Communion should disinfect their hands after the distribution of Holy Communion with vigorous handwashing with soap for 20 seconds or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

AT MASS

1. **The Celebrant and others might not extend their hands in greeting.** Mindful of yours and his wellbeing, the celebrant might not extend his hand in saying good bye as you leave church. No one should feel obligated to greet the celebrant (or one another) before or after Mass with a handshake. Eye contact and a simple smile can be even more beneficial than a hurried handshake.