



## DIOCESE *of* LACROSSE

4 March 2020

Dear Brother Priests, Deacons and Pastoral Associates,

May the Lord give you peace.

We are all affected by the news and sense the heightened anxiety and vulnerability growing in our communities related to the recent Coronavirus outbreak. With the current situation it is important that the Faithful in our Diocese feel safe and cared for in our parishes. I am asking all pastors, deacons and pastoral associates in the Diocese of La Crosse to take these preventative steps with regard to the celebration of liturgy in your parishes.

Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be urged to practice good hygiene, washing their hands before Mass or even using an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion. All chalices and ciboria ought to be cleaned thoroughly.

Assure the faithful that if they are sick or experiencing symptoms of sickness they are not obliged to attend Mass, and even that out of charity they ought not to attend.

Suspend the exchange of the sign of peace or instruct that it be exchanged without physical contact.

Further precautionary measures may be made at the discretion of the pastor such as suspending the distribution of the Precious Blood from the chalice and the consideration of emptying holy water fountains.

Above all common sense should prevail.

Let us pray for all of those individuals and families who have been affected by this illness and for wisdom and understanding for the professionals and public officials who are working for the common good during this difficult and uncertain time.

With personal good wishes and prayers, I am,

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William Patrick Callahan  
Bishop of La Crosse