



Diocese of Joliet

February 27, 2020
Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Apostolic Administrator

Brother Priests and Deacons,

With coronavirus spreading without clear knowledge of its cause and the implications involved in its spreading, I believe it best to err on the side of caution. Beginning with the reception of this letter, I ask that the following be implemented immediately in all parishes and institutions.

- Suspension of shaking of hands or other physical contact at the sign of peace
- Suspension of the distribution of the Precious blood to the faithful at Communion time

These cautions will remain in force until such time as prudence dictates that our normal practices be resumed.

The occasion of this communication affords me the opportunity to remind all ministers of communion to wash their hands thoroughly before Mass; a further precaution suggests using an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing communion.

I also want to assure the faithful that if they are sick or are experiencing symptoms of sickness, they are not obliged to attend Mass and even that, out of charity, they might not attend.

I am enclosing sample petitions which may be included during the Prayers of the Faithful.

At this time, because of unknown dimensions of this virus and its rapid spreading world-wide, prudence and prayer are called for.

My prayers are with all at this time.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Richard E Pates*

Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
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