

March 14, 2020

To: Members of Holy Angels Parish

From: Rev. Howard G. Haase – Pastor

Re: Issues surrounding Coronavirus (COVID – 19)

Greetings to you all,

With the following comments I hope to accomplish a couple of things – to address how we will approach various issues here in the parish, to remind you of many of the points the Archbishop has made over the past several days in regard to diocesan practices and to let you know we are following the issues very closely and that all of us on the staff take the health and welfare of the members of the parish very seriously. We will also continue to update you as soon as we have information to offer. For the latest information please consult the webpage of the parish ([www.hawb.org](http://www.hawb.org)), if you do not have access to that information please consult the bulletin and/or give us a call. (262-334-3038) There are a lot of scammers out there so if you hear a rumor or get a call supposedly from a staff member please hang up and **call the parish number** to make sure you are not being taken advantage of by someone not connected to the parish staff. As mentioned above some of this information you already know and some will be new – please bear with me:

- ❖ We will continue to celebrate the sacraments on a regular basis (as scheduled) such as Mass, Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Anointing. There are some larger celebrations of various sacraments canceled, however, not many; consult the bulletin for the schedule.
- ❖ If you need to receive the Sacrament of Anointing (wherever you might be located), a hospital visit or ministries of that type please call the rectory. If perchance we are being restricted from seeing you, we will explain at that time because things are changing quickly.
- ❖ As you may already know Holy Angels' School is closed for several weeks following the direction of the Archdiocese and the State Department of Education. You will hear more as time passes.
- ❖ Various parish meetings, and gatherings of organizations have been halted for several weeks also, if you are unsure how this may affect you please call the leader of your organization and get the clarification you need.
- ❖ Our Formation Programs have also been canceled for the time being – rescheduling is yet to be determined. **This does include the postponement of the celebration of Confirmation** – it will be rescheduled. More to come!

Practices at the celebration of Mass:

- **Mass will be celebrated at the normal times.** For the next 3 weeks permission has been granted, by the Archbishop, to use your discretion as to whether or not you attend mass on the weekend. He has granted all a dispensation from the obligation to attend on Sunday for the next several weeks.
- When it comes to attending mass use good sense; **if you are sick STAY HOME!** I cannot stress that strong enough – you are not growing in holiness when you come to church and get people sick.

- When it comes to the “Sign of Peace” and/or “Holding Hands” for the Lord’s prayer think about what you are doing and don’t get “bent out of shape” because someone chooses not to shake your hand. You can acknowledge folks in a lot of ways, be respectful. I am not going to prohibit folks from engaging one another in church, rather think about what you are doing – parents help your children figure out what is an appropriate action during mass and how to accomplish that.
- When it comes to communion I am not going to prohibit the reception of the “Precious Blood”. For any number of people that is a very important part of receiving the Lord at Communion. Again, use good sense when deciding what to do. We believe when we receive either the “Body of Christ” or the “Precious Blood” of Christ we are receiving the fullness of the “Risen Christ.”
- **Temporarily I am asking folks to refrain from receiving communion on the tongue. It is well-established that the virus is passed on through personal touch, bodily fluids, exhaling, etc. It is very common, when receiving on the tongue, the minister’s fingers touch the person’s tongue and/or droplets of spittle end up on our hands – that is unhealthy no matter which way you look at it. I am well aware there will be those who will be upset about this, however, we must remember that during a time like this it is not simply about “what we want and/or are comfortable with but about how we are able to adjust in order to take care of one another. We have an obligation to help keep each other healthy. I am asking all to please cooperate with this request in a spirit of fraternal charity. Remember this is on a temporary basis until such time things get back to a sense of normalcy.**

There is a lot here to absorb and I do apologize for that. I am trying to keep the steps we take as rational as possible and not to over react. I want to make sure folks have choices and not simply decide for you what you are to do. Some things I don’t have a lot of control over and others there is more wiggle room. I am aware neighboring pastors have approached some of these issues differently and I respect that because they are responsible for their parishes. I simply have a different approach and in the future may have to make some different decisions and/or adjust some of those I have already made. The parish staff is working very hard on all of this and we ask you be patient with us because so much of this is new territory and the issues are very fluid. Please keep each other in prayer and help each other stay healthy.

Many Blessings,

Fr. Howard