



To the people of Sts. Leo and Martin Parishes,

As you know there has been a lot of conversation throughout the country and world about the spreading epidemic of the Coronavirus. I sent an email out earlier this week to all registered parishioners to make them aware of the Diocesan recommendations. We are currently in a 'Level One Heightened awareness' response. The Diocese of Lincoln Coronavirus Task Force which is composed of: Steve Rademaker, M.D.; Tim Fischer, M.D.; Tom Safranek (State Epidemiologist at the Nebraska Department of Health), M.D.; Bob Sullivan, J.D.; Carmen Sullivan, R.N. are issuing the following recommendations for a **"Level One Heightened Awareness"** which Sts. Leo and Martin Parishes will observe in the following ways:

- 1) People who have flu-like symptoms or who are otherwise feeling sick should not go to Mass or other Church gatherings; the Church encourages us to make an act of "spiritual communion," where we unite ourselves to God through prayer.
- 2) Only the priest celebrant or concelebrants should receive the Precious Blood from the Chalice until otherwise notified.
- 3) It will be up to pastors to recommend whether the faithful should receive Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue.
  - At this current time I will continue to allow persons to choose whether they would like to take communion in either their hand or on the tongue.
- 4) The practice of exchanging the sign of peace is suspended.
- 5) Priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should wash hands with soap and water or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, before and after distributing Holy Communion.
  - All Ministers and servers will be required to wash their hands with soap and water prior to Mass for a minimum of 30 seconds including cleaning under their nails. As per CDC hygiene recommendations.
- 6) Omit the spontaneous gesture of hand-holding during the Our Father.
- 7) Do not hold Eucharistic and other liturgies in a daily mass chapel if there is a larger church at the parish.
- 8) Refrain from using Holy Water fonts.
  - Holy Water fonts have been removed until further notice.

- 9) Encourage ushers to open the doors to welcome the faithful at Mass.
- 10) The door handles should be sanitized after each Mass.
- Volunteers will be needed to sanitize door handles, pews, tables, etc. After each Mass including Social Hall's.

For a full review of the Diocesan protocol please visit:

<https://www.lincolndiocese.org/bishops/bishop-james-conley/statements/13602-diocese-of-lincoln-guidelines-for-coronavirus-covid-19>

If for some reason your immuno-health has been compromised you can contact me for a temporary dispensation from attending Mass but at this time there is no general dispensation from Mass attendance. Mass attendance is still required.

If you have any questions please contact Fr. Sparling at [leomartinpastor@gmail.com](mailto:leomartinpastor@gmail.com) or by calling the parish office.

In the loving heart of our Lord, I am,

*Fr. Adam Sparling*

Pastor – St. Leo Catholic Church of Palmyra and St. Martin Catholic Church of Douglas