



DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Office of the Bishop

Memorandum

DATE: March 12, 2020

TO: All Clergy

FROM: Bishop Felipe J. Estevez *x.v.r.e*

RE: Temporary Safety Measures in the Diocese of St. Augustine

In light that we are dealing with a virus in which no immunity exists up to now, and listening to requests from pastors and Catholic healthcare leaders asking for a unified policy for the entire diocese, and joining many other Bishops in the country, the following measures are to take place in all celebrations of the Liturgy as temporary precautionary measures, hopefully commencing right away, beginning the weekend of March 14-15, 2020:

1. Suspend distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful via the chalice, knowing that one receives the fullness of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ in the consecrated host.
2. Distribute Holy Communion on the hand only, ensuring you place the sacred host in such a way that you do not touch the hands. Intinction is not permitted.
3. Concelebrants must receive only by intinction.
4. Suspend a physical sign of peace, or simply omit.

5. End the non-liturgical practice of holding hands during the Our Father.
6. Empty the Holy Water fonts until further notice. For Baptisms, provide fresh water at the time of ceremony.
7. All liturgical ministers must practice good hygiene, washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20-30 seconds before and after all Masses.
8. Strongly encourage parishioners who are sick to stay home; missing Mass is not a sin if you are sick.
9. Let us include in the Prayers of the Faithful intentions for those suffering from this infectious virus and for the blessed repose of all who have died from this illness, as well as to the scientists and public health officials, that they may find soon a remedy for this global and dangerous infection.

We will continue to monitor our response and update as necessary.