



The Diocese of Knoxville

Living our Roman Catholic faith in East Tennessee

MEDIA ADVISORY
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Bishop issues directive as precaution against COVID-19

KNOXVILLE--- After closely monitoring recent developments related to the coronavirus (COVID-19), Bishop Richard F. Stika has issued a directive to all pastors, priests, and deacons that they institute the following precautions at Mass celebrations in the Diocese of Knoxville.

The directive includes suspending the distribution of the consecrated wine, knowing that one receives the fullness of Communion of Jesus Christ in the consecrated host. Bishop Stika has also suspended the offering of a physical sign of peace, inviting parishioners to instead bow their head as they offer peace to those around them.

These restrictions, similar to ones that were implemented by the diocese during the flu season, went into effect on March 3 and will remain in effect until such time that Bishop Stika deems appropriate.

In addition, Bishop Stika is encouraging that one or more of the following intercessions be included at Masses: for those who are suffering in the current outbreak of coronavirus that they might be healed, and for the happy repose of all who have died from this sickness in recent weeks; for scientists, health professionals, public officials, and all who are serving the common good in this difficult and uncertain time, that they will be filled with wisdom and understanding; that in times of illness our merciful and loving Father will strengthen our faith and trust in His goodness and divine providence; and that our compassionate Father would touch all affected by the current coronavirus outbreak with healing and peace.

On Feb. 28, the Diocese of Knoxville issued a communication to clergy, school leaders, and staff that included recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Catholic Mutual Group that outlined health precautions against the coronavirus.

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