

Diocesan Update Concerning Coronavirus COVID-19
March 12, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

There has been increasing news coverage and concern regarding the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). While the number of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is still low, the number continues to grow. At the same time, state and local governments as well as some institutions and businesses have taken steps in an attempt to mitigate the escalation of cases. We are reaching out to our Diocesan family to provide guidance on actions you can take to stay informed as well as reduce the risk to you, your family, and co-workers, along with information as to what to expect in the event of closure of our schools, offices and other locations.

1) Preventive Measures:

- a) To stay informed, we recommend visiting www.cdc.gov/coronavirus for the latest updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Much of the CDC's specific guidance at this time is directed primarily toward Airline and Cruise Ship industries, as they represent international travel, with large groups of people, confined together, for extended periods of time. Outside of that industry guidance, the advice appears to mirror those common-sense recommendations for any cold/flu season. Please ensure you and your teams are aware of these recommendations:
 - i) Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - ii) Stay home if ill with any cold/flu symptoms.
 - iii) Promote frequent hand washing with soap and water and/or use of sanitizer. In common areas where groups may gather, consider making hand sanitizer visible and available for all.
 - iv) Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
 - v) Please use prudence when it comes to larger gatherings or in-person meetings. Consider using phone conferences for these meetings.
 - vi) **Be aware that the standard for not being ill is, for at least 24 hours, being free from fever, signs of a fever, or other symptoms (without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines, e.g. cough suppressants).**

2) Operational Response:

- a) Diocesan School (parochial and non-parochial) Directives:
 - i) Operation of diocesan schools will follow all local and state health department guidelines regarding disease prevention.
 - ii) If a diocesan school's local educational agency (or public school district) closes for disease prevention, the diocesan school will also close.
 - iii) If a diocesan school has a confirmed case of COVID-19 by a student, faculty or staff member, or direct family member of those groups, the diocesan school will close for a time determined by local health officials.
- b) In the instances where a diocesan school closure occurs for disease prevention as mentioned in 2a(ii) and 2a(iii) above:

- i) Custodial staff will be provided safety wear and cleaning material to conduct a disinfecting/deep clean of the premises prior to the reopening of the school.
 - ii) Schools should be prepared for the immediate implementation of meaningful, offsite learning opportunities.
 - iii) Information on employee compensation will be forthcoming.
 - c) Diocesan Parish Offices Recommendations:
 - i) If your local parochial or non-parochial school or public school district is closed, the parish office, unless otherwise provided for, should remain open.
 - ii) In the instance where a parish office closure occurs on the basis of disease prevention:
 - (1) Custodial staff will be provided safety wear and cleaning material to conduct a disinfecting/deep clean of the premises prior to the reopening of the parish school.
 - (2) Information on employee compensation will be forthcoming.
 - d) Pastoral Center Procedures:
 - i) Regardless of the operational status of diocesan parishes and schools, the Pastoral Center will remain operational as the Emergency Management Center of the Diocese.
 - ii) Any decision to close the Pastoral Center will be communicated by the Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia, in consultation with the Office of the Bishop and Senior Staff.
 - iii) In the event the Pastoral Center closes for disease prevention, essential personnel will be available on-site or remotely:
 - (1) Essential personnel include:
 - (a) Senior Staff
 - (b) Director of Human Resources
 - (c) Manager of Building Services
 - (2) All other salaried exempt personnel will work remotely to the extent possible.
 - (3) Information on employee compensation will be forthcoming.
- 3) Travel Procedures:
- a) In instances where diocesan entities are on alert, but have not yet closed as a preventive measure, it is strongly recommended that professional travel be limited. Professional travel to national level events and to areas more severely impacted by the viral/bacterial outbreak is highly discouraged.
 - b) In instances where a diocesan school is closed as a preventive measure, professional travel by staff at that school is prohibited.
 - c) In instances where a parish or other diocesan location is closed as a preventive measure, professional travel by staff at that parish or location is prohibited.
- 4) Liturgical Recommendations:
- a) Please see the Diocesan Office for Worship March 5, 2020 memorandum regarding Liturgical Celebrations.
 - b) Any changes related to celebrating daily or Sunday Masses will be communicated separately.

For any diocesan entity not specifically mentioned above, please use this memorandum to inform your actions and decisions related to this COVID-19 matter. Also, please reach out to the appropriate Pastoral Center office for additional guidance and assistance.

Further information will be provided, as warranted in the form of updates available on our Diocesan Website. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact your immediate local supervisor or the Pastoral Center Human Resources Department.