



St. Ignatius of Antioch

March 14, 2020

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

I am very aware of the concern and anxiety in our parish community associated with the outbreak of coronavirus/COVID-19. I want to assure everyone that I, along with the Pastoral Staff, take this situation seriously and that together we remain focused on the safety of everyone in our parish.

Please know that I keep all of you in my daily prayers. I'm confident that all of us will strive to always be a source of comfort to anyone suffering physically or emotionally at this time. This is a hallmark of our community.

Daily and Weekend Liturgies: Because of the heightened concern for the well-being of all, especially the elderly, Bishop Barber is dispensing all Catholics in the Diocese of Oakland from the obligation to attend Sunday

Mass. This dispensation will remain in effect until further notice.

In accordance with this diocesan policy, I am NOT halting Mass at this time. Anyone who is not feeling well should refrain from attendance. This is an act of love to your parish community, is critical to stopping the spread of the virus and is certainly in accordance with Church teaching.

The 10:00 a.m. liturgy will continue to be livestreamed on our Facebook page.

As many of you already know I implemented a number of common-sense protocols recommended by health professionals and the Diocese of Oakland. I've listed a few of them below but rest assured that I will respond appropriately to additional recommendations from the CDC or the diocese.

- Hand sanitizer stations have been placed at the entrance to the church. Many of you already bring your personal hand sanitizers and I encourage you to continue to do so.
- The Precious Blood will no longer be distributed. To paraphrase the Catechism of the Catholic Church: because Christ is sacramentally present under both the bread and the wine, communion under the species of bread alone "makes it possible to receive all of the fruit of Eucharistic grace."
- All Extraordinary Ministers will use the hand sanitizers that are available in the altar area prior to approaching the altar. I will use hand sanitizer as well before distributing the Eucharist. EM's who are not feeling well may not participate in the distribution of the Eucharist.
- I am not suspending the Sign of Peace however we will refrain from shaking hands or touching in any way. The Sign of Peace is a personal witness to our belief that true peace is a gift of Christ's death and resurrection. A nod, bow or smile is sufficient. This policy applies to entering and leaving the church as well.
- All Children's Liturgy of the Word sessions are suspended.
- All social gatherings and fundraising events at St. Ignatius of Antioch are cancelled for the time being.
- All faith formation classes are suspended. Families will receive home study packets or on-line instructions. I will consult with the Pastoral Staff, Finance Council and Pastoral Council regarding leadership meetings and other day-to-day 'business' activity.

- Friday Lenten services and soup dinners are cancelled.
- I am not requiring that the baptismal font be drained at this time. The water is chlorinated and is tested weekly. I want to remind everyone that it is certainly appropriate to make the sign of the cross without holy water.
- Out of concern for the health and safety of the Pastoral Staff I'm requesting that all non-essential personal contact with the office be minimized for the time being. Where possible, utilize email or the telephone. If email or phone are not appropriate, don't hesitate to visit the office in person. Office hours remain Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm.

I recognize that we are approaching the holiest time in our liturgical year. Our liturgy committee, the Pastoral Staff and the Choir will work diligently to ensure a meaningful worship environment. Any additional preventative actions by the parish will be publicized by all available means including email and Facebook. The parish website will be updated regularly. There is a link to a COVID-19 resource page on the parish's homepage. I recommend that all of us seek information from reputable sources like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state or local health agencies.

On our journey of faith, we know that we will face challenges that may cause anxiety and disrupt our normal day to day activity. This virus outbreak is certainly proving to be disruptive. I encourage all of us to continue responding to this situation in a way that is in keeping with our faith tradition of love, compassion and trust in God.

Your Pastor and Shepherd,

Fr. Robert