



Feb. 28th, 2020

Keeping our community healthy - Coronavirus

As communities and public health officials respond to the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in China and its spread across the globe we join in solidarity and prayer for those impacted or working to treat those infected by the disease. Part of the joint statement of the US Catholic Bishops' Conference states, "The Catholic Church in the United States stands in solidarity with those affected by the coronavirus and their families, health workers who are valiantly trying to diagnose and treat patients, and those under quarantine awaiting results of their screening for the virus....."

There has been one confirmed case of coronavirus in Oregon, according to OHA as I write this. There are about 88 people under monitoring in Oregon as of 3/1/20. A person **under monitoring** is someone who does not have symptoms, but who may have been exposed to coronavirus, now called COVID-19, by close contact with a confirmed case or by travel to China. A person **under investigation** is someone with coronavirus symptoms - such as fever, cough or trouble breathing - but not necessarily the virus. There were about 7 people under investigation in Oregon.

As there is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. CDC always recommends the following everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Consult Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) travel website for any travel advisories and steps to protect yourself if you plan to travel outside of the U.S.A.
- Take care of your overall health. Staying current on your vaccinations, including flu vaccine, eating well and exercising all help your body stay resilient.

To contain the spread of coronavirus some dioceses in Italy cancelled their Ash Wednesday services and have suspended Masses. We do not need to panic and do the same as we have no confirmed case in Bend. However, as Bend is a tourist destination and the incubation period is unknown, I would like to be proactive and encourage everyone to follow the preventive actions mentioned above for the better health of the community. Apart from those, we are making the following changes,

- Please use the sanitizing stations at each of the door to sanitize your hands as you enter the Church.
- Wave, nod or bow and avoid shaking hands at the time of exchange of peace.
- Only the Sacred Body will be served for Communion. Please receive it in the hand. If you need on the tongue it is preferred that you approach the priest or the deacon at the end of the Communion line.



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- I will be greeting you in the narthex after Mass but will avoid shaking hands.
- We are suspending coffee and doughnuts and serving any food in the narthex after Masses on Sundays.
- We will have a special prayer for those affected and for an end to this disease.
- We will be cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces after each Mass.

Please pray for an end to this illness. Thanks for your help and support to keep our community healthy.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Jose T Mudakodiyil