



## THE ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

5 March 2020

### TO THE PASTORS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

In light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) the Archdiocese of Brisbane has been following the advice of the Queensland Health Department, who have not issued any specific directives on participation at public events like worship. We continue to monitor these directions, and our Executive Directors are meeting each day with Bishop Howell to consider further advice for the Archdiocese.

Yesterday the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference issued national advice on liturgical implications in light of coronavirus (COVID-19), which was to be implemented in the light of local circumstances.

Therefore, I have decided on the following protocols which seem proportionate to the current understanding of the coronavirus and the risks outlined by health authorities in this State:

- Parishes should refrain from distributing Holy Communion from the chalice until further notice, with a reminder to the faithful that Christ is fully present under either species.
- All ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands before and after distributing, and provision should be made for this.
- When exchanging the Sign of Peace, people should avoid shaking hands but say "Peace be with you" with some eye contact and perhaps an appropriate gesture.
- Holy water should be temporarily removed from fonts at the doors of churches, though still be available for people to take home.
- Parishes and other settings where liturgies are celebrated should make alcohol-based gels or rubs (or like products) available near the entrances.

It would be preferable and perhaps prudent for people to receive Holy Communion in the hand rather than on the tongue, but the decision on this is left with the communicant at this stage.

The Archdiocese will continue to monitor the situation closely and provide further advice as required. In the meantime we pray fervently that the threat of COVID-19 will ease, that those suffering from the virus will be cured and that those working for its relief will be strengthened.

Archbishop of Brisbane