

Dear St. Michael Parishioners and School Families,

I hope this finds you well.

I am sharing with you the conclusions of a diocesan task force concerning precautions to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

St. Michael parish and school leadership are aware of all the issues involved with the virus and wish to do everything necessary to keep all of us healthy, physically and spiritually.

As this communication says in paragraph three, **we are in level one: heightened awareness**. All of us can help by following these recommendations, as we have been striving to do for the past days and weeks.

**Diocese of Lincoln Guidelines for Coronavirus (COVID-19)**  
**March 11, 2020**

The Diocese of Lincoln urges all parishes, schools and diocesan institutions to take essential precautions to combat the spread of the coronavirus. Due to the seriousness of this threat, a diocesan task force on the coronavirus has been assembled by Father Christopher Kubat, a medical doctor. While each institution should develop its own plans against the coronavirus threat, the task force offers some precautions and guidelines.

The Center for Disease Control, together with the Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship reminds us that the influenza and coronavirus are spread through personal, physical contact with someone who is sick (either through inhaling the virus, or through hand-to-mouth transmission with a contaminated surface). The CDC says the best prevention is self-isolation of people who are sick, avoiding close contact with others, cleaning hands frequently, and covering one's mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

The CDC recognizes various "levels" to health crises. These diocesan guidelines are based on the CDC's response to any potential crisis that may be brought on by influenza or other infectious disease. **At this time, we are in level one, heightened awareness.**

[At St. Michael parish, we have been performing most of these actions for several weeks.]

**Level One: Heightened Awareness. Recommendations:**

1. People who have flu-like symptoms or who are otherwise feeling sick should not go to Mass or other Church gatherings; the Church encourages us to make an act of "spiritual communion," where we unite ourselves to God through prayer.
2. Only the priest celebrant or concelebrants should receive the Precious Blood from the Chalice until otherwise notified.

3. It will be up to pastors to recommend whether the faithful should receive Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue.
4. The practice of exchanging the sign of peace is suspended.
5. Priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should wash hands with soap and water or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, before and after distributing Holy Communion.
6. Omit the spontaneous gesture of hand-holding during the Our Father.
7. Do not hold Eucharistic and other liturgies in a daily mass chapel if there is a larger church at the parish.
8. Refrain from using Holy Water fonts.
9. Encourage ushers to open the doors to welcome the faithful at Mass.
10. The door handles should be sanitized after each Mass.

Sunday Mass schedules remain the same. If circumstances merit additional action, I will let you know as soon as I can.

Also, the method of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue or in the hand is always your choice. However, I strongly encourage everyone—at least for the short term—to receive Holy Communion in the hand to minimize potential contact. You are welcome to receive Holy Communion in the hand while kneeling, if you wish.

People with compromised immune systems or who are at greater risk are excused from Mass for the short term. In doing so, you are not committing a mortal sin. I leave it up to your prudential judgment.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [frborowiak@cdolinc.net](mailto:frborowiak@cdolinc.net) or 402-525-2566.

I am very grateful for your time and consideration of this message.

Let us pray for one another.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Kenneth Borowiak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Father Kenneth Borowiak, pastor