



March 10, 2020

Dear Priests and Deacons,

The everyday news and outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) locally has heightened everyone's fears and anxieties. As priests and deacons we have the obligation to act responsibly as we minister with the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and with all other occasions. The consistent CDC directive to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus is to wash hands regularly with soap and water and to avoid physical contact.

The directives issued by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia last Wednesday, March 4, 2020, with regard to the celebration of Mass and the coronavirus continue to be in force. However, some clarifications are needed due to some overreaching reactions and applications of the directives. Please communicate the following bullets to all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion as well.

- In all instances, the utmost reverence is to be shown by all to the Body of Christ in Holy Communion which illustrates our Faith in Christ's Real Presence.
- It is the individual right of a Catholic to determine the manner of the reception of Holy Communion, whether on the tongue or in the hand (cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, n. 92). A pastor may suggest Communion in the hand but is not to mandate it.
- If a communicant—either an adult or a child-- desires to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, this is not to be denied. Those who choose to receive Holy Communion on the tongue are not to be asked to take their places at the end of the Communion Procession.
- If it is a difficulty for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to distribute Holy Communion at this time, then he or she should voluntarily step aside from this ministry.
- With the distribution of Holy Communion, either on the tongue or in the hand, a reminder catechesis on the proper manner would be helpful at this time, so that

the Communion minister does not touch the tongue or the hand of the communicant.

At this time, there are no plans to cancel any public celebrations of the Sacred Liturgy. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you and God bless,  
Father Dennis Gill