

## *Our Lady of Lourdes Parish*

### **PASTORAL LETTER**

As your Pastor – and on behalf of the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes – I can confirm that we have immediately implemented the directives given to us thus far from our Bishop Mark Hagemoen. In the coming weeks there may be further clarifications and guidance based on the information provided to us by appropriate Health and Government agencies. Taking into account the directives given as well as our particular parish circumstances – I have added the following measures to help facilitate appropriate and prudent precautions relating to the spread of this or any other viruses:

- Greeters/Welcomers will not shake-hands coming and going from Church. A spoken word of welcome is sufficient. All parishioners will refrain from unnecessary contact prior to or after Mass. Please wash hands with soap and sanitize hands coming and going from Mass.
- The school (of which our Kitchen, cafeteria and classrooms belong to) is off-limits for any gatherings. All Parish related activity is restricted to the Church, the part of the gym entering the Church, the foyer and the use of the washrooms. Any previous activities booked in the school area are cancelled until further notice. Therefore, there will be no coffee-snacks after Mass.
- The Holy Water will not be left in the Holy Water Font (where normally individuals dip their hands in to bless themselves) – Holy Water itself is still an important Sacramental for our Spiritual life and Lenten journey. To this end – as your Pastor I will be available after every Mass to bless any objects; with particular care to exorcise and bless water and salt for your individual or familiar use. Please bring containers of water and/or salt – place it on the indicated table at the front of the Church and retrieve your blessed Sacramentals subsequently.
- The Sign of Peace which is optional at every Mass will be omitted – when attending Masses throughout the coming weeks elsewhere, if it is extended – as the Bishop indicated, do not shake hands but make a bow and/or offer a word of peace to your immediate neighbour(s) only.
- Distribution of Holy Communion: to both limit unnecessary risk of cross-contamination as well as to respect the proper piety of the lay faithful – Communion is only to be received as the host – The Body and Blood of Christ under the appearance of Bread. Furthermore, Communion can be received on the tongue or in the hands. For those desiring to receive Communion on the tongue, please only present yourself to myself (Fr. Young); by filing into the front rows of the pews; kneeling to receive; then return to your respective seats). Extraordinary Ministers of Communion will also be available in the centre and side-aisles for those not receiving on the tongue. I as well as the extraordinary Communion ministers will sanitize their hands before and after distribution.
- Concerning approved extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who bring host(s) to those homebound or sick: do not present the pix (the container for carrying Communion) **during the Rite of Communion**; rather, after Mass (while the Final Hymn is being concluded) please come to the side Shrine to St. Joseph. Sanitize your hands and present the pix. I will again sanitize my hands. Then from the Tabernacle, I will bring you the hosts of Holy Communion to go to the sick and homebound.
- A final reminder that any persons who are manifesting flu-like symptoms and other significant health problems are to remain home and to consult medical assistance (including cold, fever, acute respiratory problems, muscle pain, etc. cf. Health Advisories). This is especially important for those with previous medical problems and our Seniors. N.B. Friday Masses at LutherCare are suspended indefinitely as a result to directive from the Health Region.

~ We commend all our cares to Christ Jesus through the intercession of our Most Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Lourdes,  
Fr. G. Young