



**ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS**  
Office of Communications and Planning

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement from the Archdiocese of St. Louis Regarding Coronavirus**

The safety, health and wellness of the individuals in our parish and school communities is the number-one priority for Archbishop Carlson and the Archdiocese of St. Louis. With the recent developments regarding the COVID-19 coronavirus, the archdiocese is taking steps to help protect our communities from the spread of contagious illnesses.

This morning, Archbishop Carlson sent a letter to all priests and deacons of the Archdiocese of St. Louis to share guidelines in preventing the spread of germs at Mass. Those recommendations include encouraging parishioners to exchange the sign of peace without physical contact, to try to maintain a distance of three feet from the nearest neighbor when possible, and to stay home if they are seriously ill. Pastors are also encouraged to consider temporarily suspending the distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful via the chalice, and to use extra care when sanitizing all sacred vessels before and after all Masses—which is a regular practice.

Our Office of Catholic Education and Formation has been in contact with archdiocesan school leadership regarding similar guidelines and precautionary measures to prevent the spread of illness at school, including modifying classroom activities that involve physical contact.

Archdiocesan leadership team members are in contact with health officials and are monitoring and reacting to all developments as they occur. We are working closely with partners in the health-care community, including our doctors and hospitals such as SSM and Mercy, to help inform and advise us on all decisions. Many factors are being considered in the event of a pandemic in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, but many of those decisions will be driven by what we learn from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the St. Louis County Health Department. If necessary, actions may include the closure of facilities—and in the case of our schools, the implementation of home-learning where it is available—either through web-based classes or teleconferencing.

Please direct questions to [communications@archstl.org](mailto:communications@archstl.org).

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