



6 March 2020

**Precautions and Advice regarding COVID-19 coronavirus
Update 2**

As you know, active cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide continue to cause understandable concern among the faithful here in the Archdiocese of Edmonton. We now know that Alberta has recorded its first presumptive case of infection with the virus, in a woman from the Calgary area.

As we stated in our first communiqué of February 28, any response from the Archdiocese will be based on advice from provincial health officials. In her update of March 6, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, stated: "I want to remind Albertans that, despite this case, the risk of catching the virus is still considered low in our province."

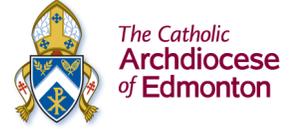
Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact; for example, in a household, workplace, health care centre, or parish. Influenza and other common viruses remain the most likely cause of a respiratory infection. To protect yourself and others:

- Use good hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing
- Cover coughs and sneezes, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill, particularly with symptoms of fever and cough
- Contact your primary health provider or [Health Link 811](#) if you have questions or concerns about your health
- If you are feeling sick, it is particularly important that you not visit loved ones in hospitals or long-term care facilities, as people in these locations are at the highest risk of complications from influenza and other respiratory viruses.

Information from the medical officer's website (alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans) provides basic background on the coronavirus and practical advice for all organizations, including parishes.

Regarding liturgical practices, Archbishop Smith is not calling for restrictions at this time. Parishes are encouraged to use the above information to remind parishioners about the importance of practising healthy hygiene. In addition we invite you to share the following particular points with your staff, ministers, and parishioners:

- If you feel vulnerable to infection because of an underlying condition or for any other reason, we invite you to use another gesture during the Sign of Peace, such as bowing, and to use personal hand sanitizer before and after Mass.
- All Eucharistic ministers should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after the distribution of Communion.



- If you are ill, the Church does not require your attendance at Sunday Mass. We encourage you to remain home out of respect for your fellow parishioners, especially if your symptoms include fever and cough. You may wish to pray along with the televised Mass from Toronto at dailytvmass.com/daily-tv-mass.

Pastors should continue to use their discretion in deciding whether to offer Communion under both species.

Please continue to pray for all those impacted by the coronavirus. Be assured that we will continue to work with provincial health officials and keep you updated as appropriate.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Father Adam Lech at the Chancery Office.