



# THE DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

*servicing berkshire, franklin, hampden & hampshire counties*

## Directives for confronting the Coronavirus

*Issued March 4, 2020*

In light of increasing concerns over both the COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus) outbreak, as well as the lingering annual flu season, Bishop Mitchell Rozanski, in consultation with his priests' advisors and diocesan staff, has issued the following directives which will remain in effect until further notice.

1. Holy water fonts are to be drained, cleaned and left empty.
2. The Sign of Peace (an optional rite within the liturgy) will be temporarily discontinued.
3. The option of distribution of the Precious Blood during the Mass will also be suspended, with exceptions for people with severe cases of celiac disease.

In addition, parishes and schools are directed to review current sanitary policies and ensure full compliance with all health directives. This includes the availability of hand soaps and/or sanitizers, especially for clergy and Eucharistic ministers who would be in direct contact with people.

All people experiencing any flu-like symptoms should refrain from gatherings including attendance at liturgies. Those experiencing illness are dispensed of their obligation to attend weekend Mass.

Finally, Bishop Rozanski, working with his cabinet, parishes and schools, will also be developing contingency plans should there be a need for further actions.