



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII  
**DIOCESE OF HONOLULU**  
WITNESS TO JESUS

**Parish Ministries**

**Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii**

**Guidance for COVID-19 Response**

**March 12, 2020**

**PRAYER FOR THE COVID-19 CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC**

[By Bishop Larry Silva]

Dear God of all the living, you sent your Son Jesus to heal us from illness and sin. We turn to his healing power in this time of anxiety over the pandemic of this potentially deadly virus.

St. Damien and St. Marianne Cope dedicated their lives to the service of those who had an infectious disease. St. Marianne Cope said, "I am not afraid of any disease," because she was confident in your power to save. At the same time, she took prudent precautions of hygiene to assure that she and her Sisters would not be infected.

Let us learn from this example to put our trust in you to save us from the ravages of disease and to take prudent measures to prevent its spread. Guide us to know when to isolate ourselves from the possibility of infection, but never let anyone be left without the care and concern of others in the community.

As our Diocese of Honolulu has been dedicated to the Divine Mercy, we pray with confidence, "Jesus, I trust in you."

Saint Damien, pray for us!

Saint Marianne, pray for us!

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*The following text is adapted from the United States [Centers for Disease Control](#)*

*And from the [State of Hawaii, Department of Health](#)*

*Official COVID-19 memos issued by the Diocese of Honolulu are available at [www.catholicahawaii.org/covid19](http://www.catholicahawaii.org/covid19)*

## **Introduction**

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) virus, and we are learning more about it every day. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. At this point, the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. Stopping transmission (spread) of the virus through everyday practices is the best way to keep people healthy.

### **1. Guidance for parish ministry programs which DO NOT have COVID-19 identified in their community.**

To prepare for possible community transmission of COVID-19, the most important thing for parishes to do now is **plan and prepare**. As the global outbreak evolves, parishes should prepare for the possibility of community-level outbreaks. Parishes want to **be ready** if COVID-19 does appear in their communities.

#### **1.1 Take steps to help stop or slow the spread of respiratory infectious diseases, including COVID-19:**

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.

The Chancery and St. Stephen Diocesan Center, in addition to its current facilities cleaning regimen, is working on providing additional alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Cleaning sprays and wipes are to be used to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards. Parishes are advised to do the same.

It is critical that persons do not participate in parish gatherings or activities while they are experiencing respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills or fatigue.

Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that persons remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or



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signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Many times, with the best of intentions, persons will attend parish-sponsored events even though they feel ill.

The Center for Disease Control offers several free handwashing resources that include [health promotion materials](#), information on [proper handwashing technique](#), and [tips for families to help children develop good handwashing habits](#).

## **1.2 Establish procedures for persons who show up sick.**

- Establish procedures to ensure that a person who becomes sick during a parish gathering or arrives at a parish gathering sick is sent home as soon as possible.
- Keep a sick person separate from well persons until they can leave.
- Remember that parishes are not expected to screen persons to identify cases of COVID-19. The majority of respiratory illnesses are not COVID-19. If a community has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and will follow up on next steps.

## **1.3 Perform routine cleaning.**

- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops) with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., desks, resources, etc.) can be wiped down by students and staff before each use.

## **1.4 Create communications plans for use with the parish community.**

- Consult with the appropriate diocesan office prior to communicating information about steps being taken by the parish to prepare, and how additional information will be shared.

## **1.5 For questions about persons who plan to travel, or have recently traveled, to areas with community spread of COVID-19, refer to CDC's [FAQ for travelers](#). Parishes can also consult with state and local health officials.**

- Parishes may need to postpone or cancel trips that could expose them to potential community spread of COVID-19.
- Persons returning from travel to areas with community spread of COVID-19 must follow guidance for self-isolation they have received from health officials.
- COVID-19 information for travel is updated regularly on the CDC [website](#).



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**2. Guidance for parish ministries WITH IDENTIFIED CASES of COVID-19 in their community.**

If local health officials report that there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, parish programs may need to take additional steps in **response** to prevent spread. The first step for is to talk with the local health officials and appropriate diocesan office. The guidance provided here is based on current knowledge of COVID-19. As additional information becomes available about the virus, how it spreads, and how severe it is, this guidance may be updated. Pastors are encouraged to work closely with local health officials and the appropriate diocesan office to determine a course of action for their programs.

**2.1 Determine if, when, and for how long faith formation programs may need to be temporarily suspended.**

- Temporarily suspending programs is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities. Parish offices may stay open for staff members who are not ill. This will allow staff to maintain communication with families, to pray for them, and keep parishioners connected to a loving and caring parish community.
- Parishes are not expected to make decisions about suspension or canceling events on their own. Pastors should work in close collaboration and coordination with the local health officials and the appropriate diocesan office to make suspension and large event cancellation decisions.
- Local health officials will help to determine if, when, and for how long to take these steps. Large event cancellations or program suspensions may be recommended for 14 days, or possibly longer if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.

**2.2 If an ill person attended a parish ministry gathering prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case:**

- Local health officials may recommend temporary program suspensions if a person attended a session prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case.
- Local health officials' recommendations for the scope and duration of program suspensions will be made on a case-by-case basis based on the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the impacted community.
- The Pastor should work with the local health department, appropriate diocesan office and other relevant leadership to communicate the possible COVID-19 exposure.



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- This communication to the parish community should align with the communication plan in the parish's emergency operations plan.
- It is critical to maintain confidentiality of the person as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

**2.3 If a parishioner has been identified with COVID-19, the pastor should seek guidance from local health officials and the appropriate diocesan department to determine when that person should return and what additional steps are needed for the school community.**

- In addition, persons who are well but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to parish gatherings.

**2.4 If parish programs are suspended, parishes can consider the following steps:**

- Cancel or postpone events such as retreats and other group gatherings.
- Discourage persons from gathering or socializing anywhere.
- Discourage gatherings at places like a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.
- Provide options for continued formation in faith.
  - Help parishioners find strength and hope in Christ! Recommend age-appropriate resources for prayer, reflection, and discipleship.
  - Use a social media platform approved by the Pastor. When communicating with minors, follow the Safe Environment [Guidelines for Technology Usage](#).

Official COVID-19 memos issued by the Diocese of Honolulu are available at [www.catholicahawaii.org/covid19](http://www.catholicahawaii.org/covid19) or contact:

Worship and Liturgical activities- Dcn. Modesto Cordero ([mcordero@rcchawaii.org](mailto:mcordero@rcchawaii.org) 808-585-3342)

Hawaii Catholic Schools – Dr. Mike Rockers ([mrockers@rcchawaii.org](mailto:mrockers@rcchawaii.org) 808-203-6764) or Dr. Llewellyn Young ([lyoung@rcchawaii.org](mailto:lyoung@rcchawaii.org) 808-203-6755)

Faith Formation activities– Jayne Mondoy ([jmondoy@rcchawaii.org](mailto:jmondoy@rcchawaii.org) 808-203-6745)

Youth and Young Adult activities- Lisa Gomes ([lgomes@rcchawaii.org](mailto:lgomes@rcchawaii.org) 808-203-6763)

Employment/HR/Volunteer ministries other than those listed in this group- Dara Perreira ([dperreira@rcchawaii.org](mailto:dperreira@rcchawaii.org) 808-342-3241)

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