

Update to the Statement of the Polish National Catholic Church regarding COVID-19

March 19, 2020

Meeting together the Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of the Polish National Catholic Church have sought to bring information regarding parish life to all Polish National Catholics. Since our original statement concerning the outbreak of COVID-19, the situation within the United States and Canada has intensified and new guidelines have been distributed, especially those from the White House in “The President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America.”

These guidelines must be taken to heart by all of our parishioners as we all continue to seek the health and well-being of ourselves, our families and our communities.

In following the guideline to “Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people,” all social and fundraising events, as well as all administrative meetings of the parishes, are to be canceled. As given in the White House guidelines, this will extend for at least the next 15 days and we will evaluate our directives following March 31, 2020. Parishioners, through their parish, are encouraged to find ways to be connected via electronic means. Several parishes have set up video or audio conferencing to hold meetings, engage in spiritual and devotional exercises and teach catechetical studies.

If the parish has a ministry of help and support to its local community or those in need, it is hoped that they will find some way to continue this ministry while following the guidelines and putting the safety of parishioners and community at the forefront.

In regards to the celebration of the Liturgy, Holy Mass will continue so that the Church will continue to pray for her people, but we are instructing all our parishioners to remain at home joined in prayer with others at home during the appropriate time. Worship aids for each Sunday will be available on the P.N.C.C. website (pncc.org) and on the P.N.C.C. Facebook Page (PNCC1), so that you can follow the liturgical prayers and readings of that particular Sunday.

The celebration of Holy Mass will appear on the P.N.C.C. Facebook Page (PNCC1) on Sundays and Holy Days. There are also several parishes of the P.N.C.C. that stream their liturgy of the Mass on Facebook. At present it is known that Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Schenectady, NY and St. Mary’s parish in Parma, OH stream their liturgy, and there may be other parishes as well.

Although we are instructing our people to remain at home, if anyone does attend the celebration of Mass, the clergy will not distribute Holy Communion during Mass. At the appropriate time, the “Act of Spiritual Communion” will be read together by the celebrant and any worshippers present. If there is any interaction of any type on our parish properties, we remind all to follow the social distancing measures and the guideline for groups of 10 or less.

We recognize the importance and necessity of the Eucharist for the Church. If there is an extreme need for the Eucharist, such as with the Sacrament of Anointing for the dying or those extremely ill or for those who may be facing some serious medical intervention, parishioners or family should contact their local pastor who will make arrangements to supply the Sacraments. Pastors are reminded that this should be done with an attention to good hygiene practices.

During Lent, Stations of the Cross or Bitter Lamentations are a part of the devotional life of the Parish. If these devotions continue, the faithful are instructed not to attend. At the appropriate time they are to remain at home and share in the devotion using an online platform, following the devotions within the P.N.C.C. Prayer Book, or other devotional aid.

Pastors and Parish Committee members are reminded to continue to be in contact with their Diocesan Bishop. As the Bishops continue to meet together, the P.N.C.C. is monitoring federal, state and local agencies where our parishes reside. If any state or local authority issues directives regarding gatherings or the use of public buildings, the Pastor or Parish Committee must communicate these to the Diocesan Bishop immediately. With this information, the Diocesan Bishop together with the Pastor and Parish Committee will make decisions regarding that parish.

To remain united in prayer and good works, all Polish National Catholics are encouraged to unite themselves in prayer often through the prayers of the P.N.C.C. Prayer Book and other P.N.C.C. Liturgical Rites. Remember, for this season of Lent, the rites of “Bitter Lamentations” and “Stations of the Cross” are available in the P.N.C.C. Prayer Book.

Also remember your ministry to each other as the people of God. Now is the time, not only to pray for each other, but also to reach out through phone calls or social media to make sure that everyone is fine, supported in times of distress and having their immediate needs fulfilled. As many children are also now home from school for an extended period, we remind parents not to forget the spiritual education of their children. Parents and children can review sections of the Catechism or share reading prayers and liturgies together. Now is also an opportunity to engage your young people in reaching out, to their friends through social media, to encourage and pray for each other, and to others in the congregation or the community through cards, pictures, letters or calls.

Let us remember that as followers of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we are to put our faith in Almighty God as we support each other in prayer and work to make sure that all are protected and cared for.

Act of Spiritual Communion

*(To be used at the time of communion when not receiving the sacrament
or anytime we wish to be united with our Lord)*

Most loving Jesus, I adore You in the Most Blessed Sacrament, in Which You are truly present. I love You above all things and I long for You in my soul. Since I cannot receive You sacramentally, I ask You to come spiritually into my heart and heal my soul. I embrace You and unite myself with You; may I never be separated from You. In flame my heart with the fire of Your love, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

Prayer in Time of National Anxiety

I come to You, Lord, in this time of uncertainty and confusion that has gripped our nation. I pray that our leaders and representatives in government are filled with Your peace, strength and courage. May Your gifts of wisdom and understanding, fortitude and counsel be sought and utilized by them for the well-being of our country. By their belief and trust in You may they provide capable leadership, promote unity and peace, and be attentive to the concerns of our people. May Your Church provide support and comfort and help strengthen our hope for peace through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.