

MOST REV. DANIEL R. JENKY, C.S.C.
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July 16, 2020
Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Dear People of God in the Diocese of Peoria,

When some weeks ago, we were able to reopen our churches, I rejoiced with all of you in this opportunity to make the Most Holy Eucharist more available to the Faithful of the Diocese. At that time, I strongly suggested that you only receive Holy Communion in the hand. The recent days have sadly seen an increased number of occurrences of the COVID-19 virus around the 26 counties of this diocese including in several of our athletic programs. At this time, I must therefore absolutely insist that the sacrament only be received in the hand – and not on the tongue – except in the most extraordinary of circumstances and for the gravest of reasons.

I also ask that everyone participating in the Liturgy, including the celebrant, wear a face covering except when he is speaking – unless the the priest would deem this practice out of keeping with his role.

I ask that the clergy and faithful readily obey this instruction especially for the protection of those who are elderly or have some other immunocompromised condition. I hope and pray it will not become necessary again to close our churches, but I do feel confident that our past experience with outdoor Masses with social distancing would enable us to continue to make the Eucharist available. At the time that we reopened our churches, we highlighted the importance of keeping our churches clean. Though the contagion is spread primarily thorough the passing of air droplets from person to the next, it is nevertheless important that our locations diligently observe the norms we have in place for keeping our locations clean.

Please remember that epidemics like storms and earthquakes have always been a part of the human experience. When Christ appears again in glory, at the end of time and history, all things will be made perfect. Until then, we need to exercise great prudence and live by faith.

I especially ask your prayers for the health of all those who are sick, and for the heroic men and women in the medical community who serve them. I strongly encourage families to continue to pray together in their homes and to make use of the social media for prayer and remaining connected to the Church, and not to exclude those who may feel isolated during these difficult and trying times.

May Our Most Blessed Lady continue to pray with us and for us. And may almighty God bless you, The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C." with a stylized flourish at the end.

✠Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
BISHOP OF PEORIA