



**Vicar General & Moderator of the Curia  
Diocese of Parramatta**  
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4 March 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

**Re: COVID-19 Update**

You will be aware through the media and other sources of emerging concerns over the spread of COVID-19 (earlier referred to corona virus.)

Several weeks ago, I issued on behalf of Bishop Vincent some directions around certain liturgical practices which have been accepted by the clergy and people of the Diocese, and it has provided a measure of protection and comfort for many of our people who are rightly concerned about this health issue.

A new set of directions were sent to the clergy today which adheres to advice that we have received from public health authorities about the risks of transmission associated with the virus. One of these risks concerns the administration of Holy Communion.

In the Latin Church, Holy Communion can be received in two ways, either on the tongue or in the hand. From today, Holy Communion can only be received in the hand because of the high risk of transmission if people continue to receive on the tongue.

I understand that for those of you who normally received Holy Communion on the tongue that this is a matter of pious practice and reverence for the Blessed Sacrament and that you may have been doing so your entire life. In the current circumstances, I ask that you adjust to the practice of Holy Communion in the hand for the sake of your fellow parishioners.

I further ask that you respect those administering Holy Communion, both ordinary and extraordinary ministers, who have received a directive that they cannot administer Holy Communion on the tongue.

As soon as this health risk is mitigated, and advice comes from the public health officials we will revert to the usual liturgical practices that applied before the appearance of COVID-19.

Every blessing in this season of Lent,

Very Rev Peter G. Williams  
Vicar General & Moderator of the Curia