Dear parishioners and friends,

As you may already be aware, Archbishop Hebda recently dispersed the faithful of the Archdiocese from their Sunday Mass obligation until further notice. You will find included his letter with information about the decision and what he is asking of us as the number of cases of Coronavirus continues to rise. Additionally, and because the virus appears to be spreading rapidly, the Archdiocese has created a web page to serve as a timely resource: archspm.org/covid19. We are also closely monitoring recommendations of public health officials, especially the Center for Disease Control: cdc.gov.

What does this mean for us at Holy Cross, St. Hedwig and St. Clement? We will continue with our regular schedule of Stations of the Cross, Confessions, and Mass. If you decide that congregating for these liturgies would constitute a risk to yourself or others, you have the freedom not to attend. Those who are scheduled for various ministries (altar servers, ushers, singers, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, sacristans) do not need to serve at their scheduled times if they do not feel comfortable doing so, nor should they worry about finding a substitute. We will celebrate these liturgies as best we can with the people present. Of course if you are in need of the Sacrament of Anointing or Confession please do not hesitate to call the parish office or (after hours) the Pastoral Emergency Line.

Archbishop Hebda asks the faithful of the Archdiocese to observe the Lord’s Day even if they do not attend Mass. One of the ways he suggests for doing this is to make a Spiritual Communion (see below). Another way to keep the Lord’s Day holy is to pray with the readings of the day. You can readily find the daily Mass readings at USCCB.org.

We have already taken a number of measures and are prepared to take further precautions.

- We have suspended the Sign of Peace at all Masses.
- We are asking the faithful who attend to use ‘social distancing measures’ to allow additional space between others.
- In addition to regularly sanitizing the doorknobs, pews, and holy water fonts. We have installed a number of hand sanitizer dispensers in our parish halls. As always, use of holy water in Church is optional.
- We did not host the ‘mini-40 Hours’ adoration at St. Hedwig on Friday as we are especially conscious of the River Village residents and our collaboration with Catholic Eldercare.
- We will not host coffee and donuts after Masses for the indefinite future.
- The Wednesday Soup Suppers are indefinitely suspended. We will clarify plans for upcoming Friday Fish Frys and other upcoming gatherings around our parish.
- Polish Saturday School has been suspended until further notice.
- Colletta Club has also been suspended until further notice.
For all other events, please keep an eye on the parish website (OurHolyCross.org) and Facebook (HolyCrossNEMpls), which will be updated regularly. If you would like to stay informed through news and event updates for our parish, please fill out a contact information sheet near the church entrances or contact the parish office to be added to our email list. If you choose not to attend Mass at this time, please consider utilizing electronic giving to support our ongoing parish ministries and operations. See OurHolyCross.org/donate to give. If you prefer, you can drop off your envelopes at the parish office or place them in the mail. We are here to support your spiritual journey, and to continue delivering the latest updates during this challenging time.

Our parish staff and leadership team are working together to determine the course of our various parish events and larger group gatherings. We are seeking to keep up with the latest information. We will prayerfully consider this information and together make informed and common sense decisions, and communicate them to you, our beloved parishioners. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Jim Gajewski, Director of Operations. Let us pray for one another and especially those who are sick and suffering at this time.

We thank you for your support and faithfulness to our parish. These present trials teach us to trust in the Lord’s help. We are confident that together, supported by the grace of God, we will be able to prudently move through this time of uncertainty.

United in the Cross of Christ,

Fr. Howe, united with the clergy, parish leadership and staff

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**ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION --- SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGOURI**

*My Jesus,*

*I believe that you are truly present*

*in the Most Blessed Sacrament.*

*I love You above all things*

*and I desire to possess You within my soul.*

*Since I am unable at this moment*

*to receive You sacramentally,*

*come at least spiritually into my heart.*

*I embrace You as being already there,*

*and unite myself wholly to You.*

*Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*

Saint Thomas Aquinas described Spiritual Communion as an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the most holy sacrament and lovingly embrace him at a time or in circumstances when we cannot receive him in Sacramental Communion.

*As the world spins, the Cross stands firm.*