

## From Fr. Rafal 3/15/2020

I would like to greet you all from the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland where the Pauline community is gathered for the General Chapter to choose the new Council and to discern what the Holy Spirit is inviting us to in the future. I think we all are concerned about the situation in the world. We see that nothing is certain, however our faith leads us to trust the Lord.

As Christians we are called to pray and support those who suffer, especially at this time. In particular, the two elements of the Eucharistic Liturgy which might concern many of the parishioners are the gestures used during the exchange of the Sign of Peace and receiving the Blood of Christ from the chalice during Communion. In response to these concerns I have implemented the following temporary practices at St. Mark the Evangelist to help prevent the spread of contagions.

- Temporary suspension of the use of the chalices for the distribution of the Precious Blood. In 1415, the Council of Constance declared that Christ is fully present in each element of the Eucharistic Sacrament because no part of Christ's substance (the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity) can be divided. In receiving Holy Communion under either species (Body or Blood) we receive Christ who is fully present.
- All the parishioners are strongly urged to receive Communion in the hand only. This is for the protection of the person ministering Communion as well as subsequent communicants. Please remember that the Lord looks into our hearts first. Receiving the Body of the Lord in the hand is the ancient practice of the Church.
- I ask that all parishioners offer the Peace of Christ, through your lips, by saying "Peace be with you," and then add a bow of supplication, instead of shaking hands. This is also a temporary practice. According the Roman Missal, offering the Peace of Christ does not require physical contact, it is not necessary.
- Holy water has been removed from the water fonts.
- Anyone who feels unwell or has flu-like symptoms is encouraged to stay home. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is broadcast on several television channels, or on the internet; a person can make a "spiritual communion" until good health returns. (See my article for resources on page 7.)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, let me remind you that these practices are only temporary. I encourage all of you, the members of St. Mark the Evangelist, to see each other as the presence of Jesus, not as germs or danger.

I invite everyone to continue to pray for those who have been deeply affected by the Coronavirus, in this country and around the world, and for all those involved in treating people and preventing the spread of infection, as well as those who feel anxious at this time.

May the peace of the Lord be with you all.

Yours In Christ,

Father Rafal Kandora, O.S.P.P.E.  
Pastor