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+Gregory the Great, pope

Dear Monsignors and Fathers,

About seven weeks ago, I wrote to all of you concerning a few timely matters related to the Sacred Liturgy such as the need to wear a face covering, the observing of proper distancing, and the need to be diligent in keeping our churches clean. At that time, I also insisted that Holy Communion only be received in the hand.

From the outset, we have known that we are living in a most unique time and that the situation continues to evolve regarding the coronavirus. While in these difficult circumstances, I still encourage the faithful to receive Holy Communion in the hand, out of respect for those who prefer to receive on the tongue, and in accord with what is now being allowed in other dioceses in Illinois, I am now permitting the practice of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue to resume. Inasmuch as a number of you have legitimate health concerns, the practice of distributing Holy Communion on the tongue is at your discretion. If you do choose to permit this practice, you are to adhere strictly to the following guidelines.

The station for the distribution of Holy Communion on the tongue is to be separate from the other station(s) – or else those receiving on the tongue are to do so after the others have received. A table is to be set up for the use of the one distributing Holy Communion so that after each communicant, you can set down the ciborium and sanitize your hands. It is important that you wait for your hands to dry (at least twenty seconds). This will take more time than we are used to, but this is an important safety precaution. Please bear in mind that the very fact that we are resuming the practice of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue will be unsettling to some parishioners because of their fears regarding safety. Please be sensitive to this. It is important that both the appearance and reality of the way we do things show that we are responding to the demands of the present situation with all due seriousness.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


✠ Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.

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