MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL PRIESTS AND PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

FROM: BISHOP MICHAEL C. BARBER, SJ +MBSJ

SUBJECT: LITURGY DURING CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK **UPDATE #2**

DATE: MARCH 11, 2020

My staff and I continue to monitor the recommendations of local health officials as the coronavirus affects the lives of all our parishioners in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Based on the latest guidance I received from the health officials March 10, 2020, the Diocese of Oakland has updated its recommendations for the parishes.

In addition to encouraging people to follow good hygiene guidelines we previously announced, the diocese is further recommending:

1. Those over age 60 are encouraged to isolate themselves in an abundance of caution so as not to be exposed to the coronavirus. Those who are ill should stay home. This means the obligation to attend Mass for those over age 60 and for the ill is dispensed.

2. All social gatherings which can be rescheduled, postponed or cancelled, should be. This would include both fun events (such as fish fries) and fundraisers. It would also include voluntary adult faith formation events (i.e., adult Bible Studies). We leave it to the pastor's discretion regarding parish business meetings. Confirmation and First Communion classes may continue.

3. For the Mass and any gathering that is still happening, we strongly encourage people to maintain a social distance (more than one arm's length) as much as possible.

4. Our churches will remain open at this time, so that people may attend Mass and receive the sacraments.

5. I join Pope Francis in encouraging priests to visit the sick and administer Anointing of the Sick for the seriously ill.

These guidelines will stay in place until further notice. Understand the coronavirus situation is fluid and the diocesan staff will provide new guidelines whenever guidance from our local public health professionals necessitate.

I wish to thank the heroic efforts of our priests many of whom are over 60 years of age, for serving our community of faithful during this stressful time. However, if any of you feel your own health may be compromised, please reach out to our Vicar for Clergy, Fr. Larry Young. He will assist you as best he can in providing coverage for your Masses.