March 12, 2020

Hello my sisters and brothers in Delaware,

We continue to closely monitor developments in the COVID-19 virus, as I know you do as well.

As I wrote last week, remain diligent in your personal hygiene practices as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Our individual actions matter! Cover your sneezes, wash your hands, and disinfect common surfaces. **Most importantly, if you have a cough or are sick or just suspect you might be sick, stay home!** I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important this advice is for keeping all of us safe, especially the elderly, those with compromised immune systems, and anyone else at a higher risk for infectious disease. Let me say it this way: you have my permission — my encouragement, my direction! — to miss church when you are even the least bit sick. **If you are prone to ignore or “muscle through” your own cold or cough, I implore you not to. Clergy or lay, if you are sick, stay home.** We all must worry about spreading **anything** to someone else in this time of pandemic. We are all in this together.

**Regarding our liturgical practices, effective immediately and remaining in force through Pentecost Sunday (May 31), all celebrations of the Eucharist must be communion in one kind with wafers (not homemade or store-bought bread).** A chalice is still present on the altar during the mass so that a small amount (2 to 3 ounces) of wine is consecrated. The celebrant (or, when necessary, another designated Eucharistic minister) consumes the wine in its entirety. Bread is then distributed to communicants.

I place this temporary requirement upon us for pastoral reasons as much as public health ones. At this time, when so much about the spread of COVID-19 remains still unknown, we are collectively fighting not only the virus but also anxiety about the virus. It is my hope that communion in one kind will renew our confidence in the mechanics of communion so that we can return our focus to why we come to worship in the first place: the sacrificial, hope-filled, world-changing love of Jesus Christ for all humankind.

I am aware that a few dioceses have canceled worship services for a few weeks. This dramatic precaution may yet be necessary in Delaware. My advisors and I are monitoring these cancellations as well as the advice of local medical and government leaders. I am also aware of the hope of many that in a time of deep national crisis the church might find ways to remain open — safely, responsibly, and with all due precaution — as much as possible. I share this hope. May we all be granted wisdom and courage in this hour.

Your brother in Christ,

+Kevin