

Prayer in the face of COVID 19

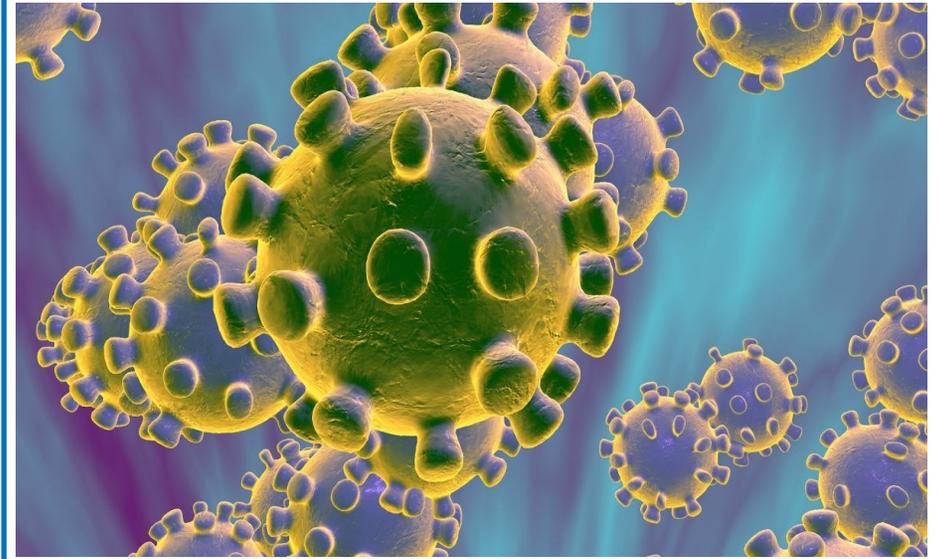
Lord Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness”. You have been with us as we faced hurricanes and earthquakes, in all our poverty and pain. Come to our aid now, as we face the global spread of the coronavirus. Be with us in this time of anxiety, uncertainty and sorrow. Heal those who are sick with the virus. Be their comfort and strength. May they regain their health through quality medical care. Deliver us from panic and fear, which prevent nations from working together and people from helping one another. Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection, your wisdom, your peace. Be with the families of those who are sick or have died.

As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. Through this period of anxiety and pain, bring us all to a stronger faith, wider charity and a deeper appreciation of your active presence in our lives.

**LORD JESUS, HEAR US AND HEAL US.
AMEN.**

(adapted from Kerry Weber)



STATEMENT FROM BISHOP CLYDE M. HARVEY ON THE CORONA VIRUS (COVID 19)

Coronavirus

Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) are viral respiratory illnesses caused by a coronavirus.

Severe symptoms

- High fever (100.4°F or higher)
- Pneumonia
- Kidney failure

Transmission

Coughs or sneezes from infected person or touching contaminated objects.

Common symptoms

Fever

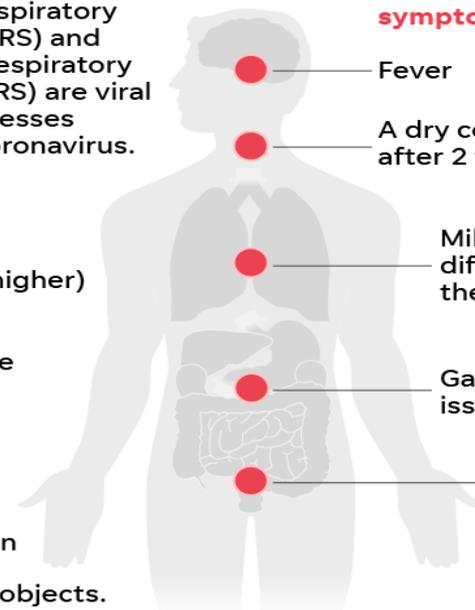
A dry cough develops after 2 to 7 days

Mild breathing difficulties at the outset

Gastrointestinal issues

Diarrhea

General body aches



Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

Lenten greetings to all of you for a fruitful celebration of this season of conversion! My personal experience has been that every Lent something happens which has challenged me to grow in my relationship with God, love of neighbor and fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

This year the Corona virus, COVID 19, has begun to challenge both our faith and our love for one another. An epidemic of any kind invites us to ask: where is God in all of this? What can we learn about God, ourselves and our neighbor as we live through this experience? Our Catholic experience of faith tells us that God does not send disasters upon us. Rather the God who loves us is with us as we face those moments which threaten to overwhelm us. *“He makes his sun to shine (and his rain to fall) on honest and dishonest people alike”*(Mt.6:44)

God is with us as we face COVID 19. Our response must be both in faith and good works. Faith alone will not save us. The good works required of us are rooted in Christian charity, an active concern for the other and common sense based on our increasing understanding of this epidemic

1. This virus is one of many viruses which we face every year. People die every year from viruses, most often because of pre-existing conditions. We will beat this virus eventually as we have beaten others. Hence our first rule of thumb must be – **DO NOT PANIC. BE CAREFUL AT ALL TIMES.**
2. **Practice basic hygiene at all times**, the same hygiene we have been taught for years and must now make sure we pass on to our children. Wash your hands frequently during the day, but do not waste water. The dry season is yet to come.
3. Persons with colds, cough, fever and sneezing, should remain at home until they have recovered. It has always been the teaching of the Church that, if you are seriously ill, you do not have an obligation to attend Mass. We must take special care with our children and the elderly since they are the ones most at risk.
4. **The joining of hands at the Lord’s Prayer is to be avoided until further notice. The lifting up of hands (orans) posture is permitted.**
5. The form of the **Sign of Peace must be reconsidered but it is NOT to be dropped.** A change of gesture should be enough - no

shaking of hands and hugging. One may look the person in the eye with a simple bounce or a clear bow. Some young people have suggested a foot shake. If they can manage it between the pews, God bless them.

6. **Until further notice, communion should be given in the hand.** The countries where the virus is already active, if they have not stopped mass altogether, have determined this to be the safest way. **Communion on the tongue and by intinction is therefore suspended. The sharing of the cup is also suspended**, except in very small groups.
7. If holy water is to be placed at the entrance of churches, a few drops of bleach should be put in it or it should be in bottles which allow people to sprinkle themselves.
8. The clergy and extraordinary ministers of communion have a particular responsibility for their personal hygiene to set a proper example.
9. Parishes should, wherever possible, provide proper washroom facilities with soap and water, as well as hand sanitizers.
10. We recommend to all our people to increase our intake of fresh fruits, especially Vitamin C, to boost our immune system.

The virus calls for a basic Christian charity among us with a deeper sensitivity to the dangers which we may be to others and others to us. It is not a time for scorning others. The unity which we celebrate and share in the Eucharist is all the more reason to find the right balance between self-protection and active care for brothers and sisters.

Let us all co-operate with the authorities, especially the Ministries of Health and Education, as they guide the nation in the days to come. Let us avoid all fake news, sharing only what we know to be true. This crisis can also have serious social and economic consequences if we do not treat with it rightly. God is with us in faith. **This virus gives us a context in which to live our Lenten disciplines, prayer, fasting and acts of charity. We pray that we may find an effective response to this virus very soon.** Let us, as citizens, church and nation do the good works which this dangerous situation requires.

**Clyde Martin Harvey, Bishop of St. George’s-in-Grenada.
March 3rd 2020.**