



March 14, 2020

Dear Regional Ministers,

May God give you peace.

I am writing regarding the recent outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that is infiltrating the world. The seriousness of this virus is clear, as is the desire to avoid spreading the virus. Realizing that the majority of our members are seniors, who are in the high risk category concerning the coronavirus, the OFS National Council is providing you with the following guidance. **Please distribute this message to all of your local fraternities.**

Firstly, we highly recommend that all face-to-face local and regional chapters or meetings be cancelled for the time being. If this involves cancelling elective chapters, either locally or regionally, the National Council will continue to recognize the existing elected councils until such time as elections can be held.

More importantly, as brothers and sisters, all of us are encouraged to find ways to stay in touch with each other, with our families, with our friends and with those in need. Even though we may not be able to be physically present to each other, we can call each other, drop off notes and/or food to those who are in self isolation or are elderly and, for those who have access to the internet, connect through email or other media. It is a time for us to be innovative in the way we provide care to those around us.

We ask you to continue to follow healthy hygiene practices as outlined in the guidelines of your national and provincial governments.

With regards to participating in public worship, we urge you to follow the guidelines of your local diocese. For those who are unable to attend mass, *Salt and Light TV* broadcasts a mass every day both online ([saltandlighttv.org/mass/](http://saltandlighttv.org/mass/)) and on their television station (check your local guide for channels and times). Daily mass is also available on YouTube which can be accessed at your convenience. You are also encouraged to use this time to reflect on the Word of God, including the daily readings in your missalette, as well as other spiritual writings.

Finally, let us all use this situation as an opportunity to spend more time in prayer for our world. We are including (below) Pope Francis' *Prayer to Our Lady, Health of the Sick*, which we urge all members to pray daily. You may also wish to consider this as an opportunity given to us for self reflection, a kind of retreat from the busyness of life. In addition, we ask for your continued prayers for our brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering because of this outbreak, for their speedy recovery, for the repose of the souls of those who have died and for comfort and consolation to their families. Finally we pray for a speedy end to this pandemic.

Doug Clorey, ofs  
National Minister



**Prayer to Our Lady, Health of the Sick**

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey  
as a sign of salvation and hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain,  
with steadfast faith.  
You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.  
We are certain that you will provide, so that,  
as you did at Cana of Galilee,  
joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.  
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform ourselves to the Father's will  
and to do what Jesus tells us:  
He who took our sufferings upon Himself,  
and bore our sorrows to bring us,  
through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.  
We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.  
Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test –  
and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.