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**To:** Ronald Johnson <[Rjoh428288@aol.com](mailto:Rjoh428288@aol.com)>

**Subject:** Coronavirus Official Statement

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The Florida State Council of the Knights of Columbus has received requests for official response to questions related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The State Deputy extends precautionary suggested guidelines to help alleviate fears, and to reduce the risk of spreading the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in our Jurisdiction. A statement was recently put out by the Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Diocese of Venice, Florida. We have mirrored several of the suggested precautions issued by Bishop Dewane and offer the following.

In response to recent concerns over the spread of the Coronavirus, the Florida State Council of the Knights of Columbus suggests that all Knights of Columbus, their families and friends take precautionary steps which promote the health of all. The steps given are focused on prevention, precautions and prayerful accompaniment of all affected by the Coronavirus. These guidelines are based on the advice given by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Florida Department of Health as well as the common-sense practices that the Diocese of Venice communicates annually during flu and cold season.

Our State Chaplain, Monsignor Thomas Skindeleski, will offer prayers for those who are at risk, all who have become ill, as well as those public health officials and health care workers who are involved in battling the Coronavirus. We ask all faithful Knights and their families to consider adding to their daily prayers the above mentioned.

For more information on the effort to prevent and contain the Coronavirus, the faithful are encouraged to follow the guidance of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/>, and the Florida Department of Health [www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/01/012420-2019ncov.article.html](http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/01/012420-2019ncov.article.html) as well as the measures communicated in their local parishes.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE RISK:**

### **For Individuals:**

1. Individuals ought to follow common-sense measures to avoid the spread of the Coronavirus.
2. Stay home if you are feeling sick or your immune system is compromised. If you are sick or at risk, you are permitted to miss Mass. If you are sick, do not attend council or assembly meetings, but continue to monitor what is going on through social media, email and phone.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.
4. Wash your hands often using soap and water, especially after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or using the bathroom. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers if you do not have access to soap and water.
5. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often.

### **Precautions at Churches, meeting places and schools:**

1. Attention should be given to helping those who are at greater risk to avoid contact which might lead to contracting the Coronavirus.
2. Carry Hand Sanitizer, sanitize hand before receiving Communion in one species, receive only the host distributed to the hand.

3. Temporarily refrain from shaking hands or making other physical contact during the Sign of Peace and do not hold hands during the recitation of the Our Father.
4. Temporarily refrain from using community Holy Water fonts. Bring your own container (purchase from church gift store) and ask for Holy Water provided in sanitary containers. Have a spigot so that the faithful can safely access this Sacramental without fear of contamination.

Following these precautionary suggestions can help reduce the potential for contracting the Coronavirus (COVID-19) as well as the flu.

While we take this and every other threat to the health and welfare of our membership very seriously, we also want everyone to stay calm, continue to conduct their business and the work of our Order. Remember, all the charitable and service programs that the Knights of Columbus provide within our parish communities and the greater community at large, play an important role in the communities they serve. **If you are healthy and have not been exposed that disruption or loss of these services due to volunteer abstention could have damaging consequences to those who rely upon us.**

If we take the necessary precautions, we can safely maintain our service and charitable programs and do so with minimal risk to the volunteers.

Thank you for your understanding, your thoughts and prayers. Together we will get through this trying situation and will be stronger for implementing the safety processes.

Please make sure that all your Councils, and members receive this.

Fraternally,

Scott A. O'Connor, State Deputy

CC: Msgr. Thomas J. Skindeleski, State Chaplain