



Recently, the Office of Divine Worship has received inquiries regarding the celebration of Holy Mass during the flu season. Inquiries have sought guidance regarding certain liturgical practices and concerns over the transmission of the cold and/or the flu.

The following guidelines are offered:

1. While communion under both species has “a more complete form as a sign when it is received under both kinds,” [GIRM 281], it is not always necessary or advisable.
2. It is left to the prudent judgment of the pastor whether communion under both kinds should be offered during a period in which there is a high incidence of colds and the flu.
3. If Communion under both kinds is retained those who are not feeling well should refrain from receiving from the chalice and should receive Holy Communion under the form of bread alone to avoid transmitting any illness.
4. Due to the fact that our hands are often transmitters of the cold and flu, care should be taken that:
  - a. No one should ever be permitted to self-intinct (dip) the consecrated host into the Precious Blood. The practice is prohibited by law and its result can be the unknowing transmission of illness.
  - b. In place of the regular way of offering the sign of peace a nod of the head and a verbal greeting of peace rather than the shaking of hands during this cold and flu season may be used.
  - c. Holding hands during the Our Father should be discouraged.
5. Those who are Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the parish church or those involved in ministry to the homebound should take special precautions. They should heed all health directives and frequently wash their hands, avoiding contact with others, especially those most susceptible to illness.
6. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who are feeling unwell or have any symptoms of illness should excuse themselves from this ministry.
7. Catholics who are ill are excused from Sunday worship out of respect and concern for their fellow worshipers. Catholics who are ill are encouraged to make a spiritual communion during the time of their illness.

8. Parishes who cease the distribution of Holy Communion under both species during the winter period should take the opportunity to catechize the faithful regarding the Church's teaching about the Most Holy Eucharist, especially regarding the true, real and substantial presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ under either species.
9. For more information please refer to the document [Communion under Both Kinds](#) which can be found on the Office of Divine Worship webpage.
10. Given the outbreak of the coronavirus the Office of Divine Worship has consulted the State of Oregon Office for Public Health Practice. Scientific consensus seems to be that although bacteria & viruses can be found on the communion cup, despite wiping and able to survive the alcohol, the risk of transmission is thought to be low. However, the cessation of the distribution of Holy Communion from the Chalice would significantly lower the risk.
11. It is important to ensure that those who receive or distribute from the Chalice are free from any symptoms of infection. Some advice from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) "*Churches may wish to consider advising their congregation that sharing the communion cup is discouraged if a person has an active respiratory infection (i.e., cold or flu) or moist or open sores on their lips (e.g., herpes).*"
12. "*We have thousands of cases of influenza and many hundreds of hospitalizations from influenza right here in the Portland area this year. And we have zero cases of this Novel Corona virus. Right now, a bigger threat to all of us is influenza.*" - Medical Director of Communicable Disease and Immunization for the Oregon Health Authority.
13. This Office would reiterate that Holy Communion under both kinds is not mandatory at any Mass in the Archdiocese of Portland.
14. Further to a recent memo to all the bishops of the United States from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) entitled 'Liturgical Celebrations and Public Health Concerns' and after consulting with the Archbishop the Office of Divine Worship now recommends that all parishes cease the distribution of the Precious Blood for the time being and that the Sign of Peace be eliminated or done without the chance of physical contact.