



Archdiocese of Santa Fe
**Office of Communications/
Social Media**
4000 Saint Joseph Place NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120-1714

Celine B. Radigan, Director
Voice 505.831.8180, FAX 505.831.8248
cradigan@archdiosf.org, www.archdiosf.org

NEWS RELEASE

**Archbishop John C. Wester Issues Directives
Regarding Liturgical Practices During the
2020 Influenza Season**

ALBUQUERQUE – Tuesday, January 7, 2020—IMMEDIATE RELEASE—New Mexico is one of the states listed by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as having widespread influenza outbreaks and high Influenza-like Illness (ILI) Activity.

Due to the increasing severity of the influenza season, Archbishop John C. Wester directs the following steps be taken in regards to the celebration of Mass:

- During the Sign of Peace, instead of shaking hands or hugging as is often practiced, please simply nod your head toward one another and avoid bodily contact.
- While some persons have the practice of holding hands during the Our Father, they are asked to refrain at this time. They may extend hands toward Heaven or fold their hands—folded hands being the liturgical norm.
- Holy Communion is not to be received under both species; rather, only the Consecrated Host is to be distributed. The Church and its Councils have always recognized that both the Lord's Body and Blood as present even in either species alone.
- The celebrant is to encourage reception of the Consecrated Host in the hand; this is actually the norm in the U.S. per the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). This will limit contact with saliva and the potential spread of the influenza virus. It is requested that persons who insist on receiving the Eucharist on the tongue wait to the end of Holy Communion in order to be the final communicants, limiting possible virus transmission. This is requested as an act of charity toward their brothers and sisters in the congregation.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands just prior to distribution of Holy Communion, and such is recommended also after distribution for their own protection. An anti-bacterial gel or hand wipes may be used.
- Those who are sick, sneezing or coughing are highly encouraged to stay home. Sunday television Masses are available in English and Spanish. It is not sinful to miss Mass on Sundays due to illness.

Please remind all that the influenza virus is virulent, causing deaths each year especially among the very young and the elderly. The archdiocese institutes these directives not to limit expression of faith, but rather as a preventive measure against a widespread and potentially deadly disease. Thus we ask cooperation in laying aside optional personal preferences for service and charity toward your neighbor.

These directives will be revoked when the situation improves.

For more information, please contact the Office of Worship at 505.831.8194 or the Office of the Vicar General at 505.831.8158--END