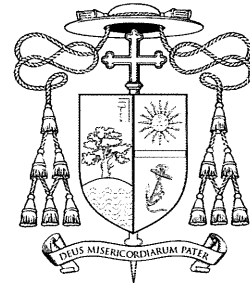

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL PRIESTS AND PARISHES
OF THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

FROM: BISHOP MICHAEL C. BARBER, SJ + MBSJ.

SUBJECT: LITURGY DURING THIS COLD AND FLU SEASON

DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 2020



As we face the annual cold and flu season, complicated by concerns over the novel coronavirus, it is important that we all understand and promote healthy practices in our Parishes.

At this time, it is *not* a Diocesan directive, but an *option* for a pastor to suspend the giving of the Precious Blood at Mass, and the shaking of hands at the Sign of Peace. This may change depending on the public health situation in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

It is important to remind the faithful that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not apply to those who are ill, especially those who suffer from contagious disease. It is a sign of consideration for others that those with flu-like symptoms remain at home, perhaps watching a Mass on television, or reading the appointed Sunday scripture, and offering their illness for a spiritual intention. This applies equally to Deacons, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors, Musicians, Altar Servers, Ushers, etc., who experience any symptoms.

Within parishes, we must also maintain good habits:

- Check and fill hand-soap dispensers in restrooms.
- Provide hand sanitizer in the vestibule and sacristy.
- Maintain clean, fresh holy water and holy water fonts.
- Sanitize with disinfectant wipes places and things that are frequently touched.

Please see below for further resources. If the issue becomes more serious and we are advised by the authorities to take further action, we will reassess the matter and inform you of any changes.

SUGGESTED ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE MASS

During this cold and flu season we would like to remind you that those who are ill are not obliged to attend mass and should stay home to recover.

If you are feeling ill today, please refrain from partaking of the Blood of Christ from the communal chalice. We also ask that those who are not well refrain from offering your hand to others at the sign of peace.

No one who fears infection should feel obligated to share the sign of peace or receive the Most Precious Blood from the communal Chalice. Sacred Communion is full received by participating in one or both species.

We pray for the health and recovery of all who are ill and not with us today.

Ejemplos de Anuncio antes de empezar la Misa

Durante esta época de la gripe, les recordamos que aquellos que están enfermos no están obligados a cumplir con el precepto de la Misa, y deberían quedarse en casa hasta que se recuperen completamente.

Si usted se siente enfermo hoy, por favor absténgase de comulgar de la Sangre de Cristo. También le pedimos que no le de la mano a otros durante el signo de la paz.

Nadie que tenga miedo al contagio está obligado a compartir físicamente el signo de la paz o a recibir la Preciosa Sangre en el cáliz que todos compartimos. La Sagrada Comunión se recibe perfecta y completamente comulgando sea de una o de las dos especies.

Oramos por la salud y la recuperación de todos los que están enfermos y no pueden acompañarnos hoy.

SAMPLE PARISH BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS¹

WINTER COLD AND FLU SEASON

As always, you are reminded to use common good sense in the reception of Holy Communion during the annual cold and flu season.

If you are feeling ill or think you may have been exposed to a virus, you should refrain from partaking of the Blood of Christ from the communal chalice. In the same way, you should refrain from offering your hand to others at the sign of peace. Likewise if you are not comfortable sharing the sign of peace or receiving Holy Communion from the communal chalice for fear of infection, you should feel no pressure to do so.

All of us must be aware of such sensitive matters in the intimate life of the Christian community and we should expect that some will refrain from the sign of peace and the communal chalice out of care for our well-being and not out of unkindness or a lack of piety.

LITURGY AND ILLNESS

Please be aware that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not apply to those who are ill, especially those who suffer from contagious disease. It is a sign of consideration for others that those with flu-like symptoms remain at home. We encourage those who are ill to unite themselves to our Crucified Lord and offer their sufferings for their sanctification and the sanctification of the whole world.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STAY HEALTHY

- **Know the facts.** Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- **Take everyday actions to stay healthy.**
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or into your sleeve if you do not have a tissue available. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- **Wash your hands thoroughly and often** with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** Germs spread that way.
- **Stay home if you get sick.** CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- **Get vaccinated.** Vaccination is the best protection we have against flu.
- Source: Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov>)

¹ Source: Archdiocese of San Francisco, Office of Worship.

INFLUENZA AND THE LITURGY



Throughout the years, the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship has addressed the liturgical implications of the transmission of pathogens on numerous occasions. With the flu season now taking place in the United States, we offer the following brief reflections on influenza and the liturgy. Continuously updated information on influenza is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.CDC.gov/flu...

INFORMATION ON INFLUENZA

This information is excerpted from the CDC's influenza website:

What is influenza (also called flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

How flu spreads

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

Period of contagiousness

You may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

Preventing seasonal flu: Get vaccinated

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season. About two weeks after vaccination, antibodies develop that protect against influenza virus infection. Flu vaccines will not protect against flu-like illnesses caused by non-influenza viruses. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three influenza viruses that research suggests will be most common.

THE CHURCH'S LITURGICAL RESPONSE TO INFLUENZA

In previous years, what has the Church done in localities where the outbreak of Influenza is most significant?

In those localities where the outbreak of the disease has been the most significant, bishops have introduced several liturgical adaptations in regard to such practices as the distribution of Holy Communion and the exchange of the Sign of Peace in order to limit the spread of contagion.

What measures should be taken in Roman Catholic liturgies in the United States of America during flu season?

Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be especially reminded of the need to practice good hygiene. Ministers of Holy Communion should always wash their hands before Mass begins; a further precaution suggests using an alcohol-based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion. The faithful should be instructed not to receive from the chalice if they feel ill.

What about further adaptations or the restriction of options at Mass?

The Diocesan Bishop should always be consulted regarding any changes or restriction of options in the celebration of Roman Catholic Liturgy. However, the need for the introduction of widespread liturgical adaptations for the prevention of the transmission of influenza in the dioceses of the United States of America is not evident at this time.

What is the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops doing to address this question?

While the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship will continue to monitor the situation and provide the best advice possible to Diocesan Bishops and their Offices for Worship, it is ultimately the responsibility of the Diocesan Bishop to recommend or mandate liturgical changes in response to influenza in particular local areas. The Secretariat likewise appreciates whatever information Diocesan Offices for Worship are able to provide concerning local conditions and the pastoral responses developed by Diocesan Bishops.