



Liturgical Adaptation

Due to the upcoming influenza (flu) season and questions regarding communicable diseases, such as Ebola, we will be re-instituting the liturgical adaptations we have used in the past. Please begin utilizing these adaptations immediately.

Liturgical Adaptations

I am asking all our parishes to take the following precautions to help mitigate the effects of the influenza and to also calm the fears of the laity.

- The faithful should be encouraged not to hold hands during the reciting of the Our Father.
- The faithful should be encouraged to share the Sign of Peace without touching hands or kissing. This can be done with meaningful eye contact, smiles, and a bow of the head in reverence to one another.
- The faithful should be encouraged to receive Holy Communion in their hands, and not on their tongue.
- The Precious Blood is not to be distributed to the faithful during Mass. Holy Communion is only to be given in the species of the consecrated bread by hand.
- Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be especially reminded of the need to practice good hygiene. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be encouraged to wash their hands before Mass begins, and to use an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion.
- Priests and deacons should determine when they themselves should not distribute Holy Communion. In the event that altar servers or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are sick, whether it is the flu or the common cold, then he or she should not serve until the sickness has passed. Continue to remind parishioners not come to church when they are not feeling well.
- The re-institution of traditional means of sharing the sign of peace and normal distribution of Holy Communion, including the Precious Blood will be determined at a later time.

In addition to liturgical adaptations listed above, I would like to make the following suggestions regarding pastorally implementing these temporary changes within the parishes:

- Your pastoral judgment and pastoral approach are critical to ensuring that these temporary changes are seen as being in the best interest of the faithful, as well as ensuring that no one with special circumstances is excluded from the Eucharist.
- Remind parishioners that they should not come to church when they are not feeling well.
- Presiders and deacons should carefully wash their hands before and after Mass, and use an alcohol based hand sanitizer before distributing Holy Communion.
- Hospitality Ministers (Greeter and Ushers) should be encouraged to carefully wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer before and after their ministries of greeting others, taking up the collection, and passing out bulletins at the end of Mass.
- An announcement about the requested changes should be made before Mass begins. And when the people are invited to greet one another, this should be after the announcement that they are not to shake hands has been made.

- Because not everyone is present at the beginning of Mass, it will be important to include a comment about these temporary changes during the homily and/or after the Great Amen and before reciting the Our Father.
- If a non-communicant comes forward for a blessing, the blessing should be given without touching them.
- This is an important time to pay attention to the members of your community who are handicapped or need assistance in receiving. They should not feel turned away from Holy Communion at this time or any other time. Having an experienced minister go to them at the end of Holy Communion and serve them will ensure they are not excluded, and the minister is then able to immediately go and wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.

Below is information from the Centers for Disease Control that you can publish in your bulletin to help the faithful be aware of the steps they can take to stay healthy and prevent the spread of the seasonal influenza and other communicable diseases.

Preventing the Flu:

Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs (in addition to receiving the flu shot):

1. **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
2. **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
3. **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
4. **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often with soap and water is most effective (Center for Disease Control – Atlanta).
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
6. **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Let us continue to pray for our communities and the families that are affected by influenza and other communicable diseases.