

The Flu Season

Dear Friends,

As we approach the flu season, we are particularly cognizant of the H1N1 influenza ("Swine Flu").

Bishop Brown has recommended that all priests and deacons, as well as all members of our Diocese, exercise common-sense precautions when it comes to the Liturgy.

All influenza, and in particular H1N1, is a respiratory infection that is often spread through contact with coughing and sneezing of an infected person. Simple hygiene, such as washing hands and using alcohol-based hand sanitizers at appropriate times, can prevent the spread of influenza.

Public health officials emphasize a few simple practices for most effectively reducing the risk of spreading influenza:

- Stay home if you are sick, and do not risk the health of others. It is not sinful to miss Mass if you are sick and unable to attend. In fact, it is an act of charity for those with flu symptoms to stay home and not risk the health of others.
- If you feel you "might" be coming down with something, stay home.
- If you have to cough or sneeze, cover your mouth or nose with something other than your hand.
- Wash your hands frequently.

The Diocese offers the following additional recommendations:

- Since holding hands during the "Lord's Prayer" may lead to the transmission of the virus, the faithful are urged to extend hands or keep hands clasped during the praying of the "Our Father."
- The faithful are encouraged to share the "Sign of Peace" without touching (or shaking) hands: that is, simply by saying, "The Lord's peace be with you."
- The faithful are strongly encouraged to receive Holy Communion in the hand since it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid contact with saliva in distributing Holy Communion on the tongue. This is a limited and temporary advisement/restriction.

It remains the option of the communicant whether or not he or she receives the Precious Blood. Bishop Brown does not want to eliminate the option of receiving the Eucharist under both forms of the Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ, because some persons are not able to receive the Body of Christ due to allergies and other health reasons.

Sincerely,

Fr. Craig