

Memorandum

To: ADLA Active Clergy and Parish Life Directors
From: Sister Rosanne Belpedio, CSJ
Date: February 27, 2020
RE: Cold and Flu season

The Office for Worship has received more inquiries regarding the winter flu season, the current situation of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus), and any possible restrictions to the distribution of Holy Communion in the archdiocese. To date it has been decided not to put any restrictions on celebration of the Mass. However, we encourage the exercise of vigilance and discretion at the local level. The flu season offers the opportunity to renew our ritual practice and teach the faithful about the use of common sense in the customs of holding hands during the Lord's prayer, sharing the sign of peace, and sharing from the chalice. The current situation presents an opportunity to implement the Orans position during the recitation of the Lord's prayer. Explaining that during the recitation of the Lord's prayer in the early church the posture was to raise one's eyes and hands toward heaven in acknowledgement of our sole reliance on God. At the sign of peace, a simple nod and speaking the words, "Peace be with you," would be appropriate.

While we wholeheartedly recognize the right of each communicant to receive Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue, during this time of heightened precaution, it might be prudent to receive communion in the hand. This would prevent the possibility of transmitting any germs from one communicant to another.

It is also important to remind the faithful that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not apply to those who are ill, especially those who have a contagious disease. It is a sign of consideration for themselves and others that those with flu-like symptoms remain at home.

Ministers also become ill. Therefore, to avoid celebrating Mass when ill, priests should consider alternatives that may be available to them in such circumstances. A short list of priests who could be called in case of need should be prepared at all parishes.

Parish communities must also maintain good hygiene:

- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should wash and or sanitize their hands before mass begins. If one sanitizes hands before distributing Holy Communion it should be done discreetly.
- Check and fill soap dispensers in all restrooms of the church and school. It might be advisable to also have on hand large dispensers of sanitizer in the church vestibule.
- Maintain clean fresh holy water in the fonts.
- Frequently sanitize those surfaces in the church that are touched frequently.

- We are monitoring the situation and will advise according to the recommendations of the CDC.
- You can also check directly at www.cdc.org for 24/7 updates.

Please find below a few useful resources:

Suggested announcement before Mass

During the cold and flu season and the current situation with the coronavirus outbreak all parishioners are reminded to use common sense and good hygiene. 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. If you are not already accustomed to do so, you might consider receiving Holy communion in the hand during this cold season. We also suggest that those who are not well refrain from offering their hand to others at the sign of peace. We pray for the health and recovery of all who are ill and not with us today.

Sample announcement for the Parish bulletin

Winter Cold and Flu Season

You are reminded to use common sense in your participation at mass and 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 offering your hand to others at the sign of peace or during the recitation of the Lord's prayer. A smile and a heartfelt, "Peace be with you," should suffice. During the recitation of the Lord's prayer you are invited to assume the orans position. That is the raising of the hands and eyes toward heaven as a gesture acknowledging our sole reliance on God. Likewise, if you are not comfortable or receiving Holy Communion on the tongue or from the communal chalice for fear of infection, you should feel no pressure to do so. We understand that some will refrain from participation in the liturgy or the sign of peace and the communal chalice out of care for our wellbeing and not out of unkindness or a lack of piety.

For further clarification please contact Sr. Rosanne Belpedio, CSJ at the Office for Worship rbelpedio@la-archdiocese.org

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Rosanne Belpedio, CSJ

Director, Office for Worship

Archdiocese of Los Angeles