



MEMORANDUM

TO: Priests and Pastoral Leaders

FROM: Office of Divine Worship

DATE: March 5, 2020

RE: Cold and flu season and Coronavirus outbreak

Each winter, as we move through the cold and flu season, concerns are raised regarding the potential spread of influenza within our parish and school communities. Because of the unpredictable nature of the flu, and in light of the global attention to the COVID-19 (Corona Virus) outbreak, there has been an increase in calls and emails to the diocese regarding possible restrictions at the Mass and most especially the distribution of Holy Communion.

In line with recommendations from the U.S.C.C.B., and our own diocesan policies, we offer the following preventative steps with regard to the celebration of the liturgy:

- Parishioners with symptoms of illness should be reminded that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not apply to those who are ill, especially if they are suffering from a contagious illness. This is an obligation in charity for themselves and others that those with flu-like symptoms remain at home.
- Priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are encouraged to practice good hygiene, including washing hands before Mass begins. The use of an alcohol based antibacterial hand sanitizer before and after distributing Holy Communion is also advised.
- The Sign of Peace need not be announced or exchanged. If the invitation is announced, parishioners should consider a simple gesture such as a head nod, a bow or simply the words "*Peace be with you.*" Avoiding handshakes, embraces and other physical contact is advised.
- If your parish has the practice of distributing Holy Communion under both species, the distribution of the Precious Blood of Christ from the chalice should be discontinued for the time being.

Please feel free to call the Office of Divine Worship at 920-272-8341 or email at worship@gbdioc.org should you have additional questions or concerns.