



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS
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OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

January 31, 2020

Dear Monsignors, Fathers and Deacons,

As flu-like conditions persist, this is a reminder that efforts should continue to be directed towards lessening the effects on our school children, teachers, employees, families and all parishioners through communications and education. As Bishop Talley and Fr. Marshall have discussed with some of you, please use your best judgment in deciding what to convey throughout your parish. As an example, which you can adapt and use, here's what Father Gallagher shared at Holy Rosary:

During the cold and flu season, we ask that everyone be mindful of others when attending Mass. If you are sick and believe you are contagious, please stay home. The obligation to attend Mass is not required if you are ill. If you do have cold or flu like symptoms kindly 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. While it is the norm at our church to offer the Eucharist under both sacred species, please refrain from drinking from the chalice if you feel ill. Holy Communion is fully received by participating in one or both species. You are still receiving the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Lord even if you receive only the Sacred Host.

Also, knowing how quickly germs can spread, here are some tips from the *Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* to consider sharing at your schools, community gatherings and more, if you have not done so already. Please see the attached CDC document for use, too.

- **The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated.**
Also, good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu.
- **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.
- **Stay home when you are sick.**
If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. This will help prevent spreading your illness to others.
- **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.
- **Clean your hands.**
Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **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.
- **Practice other good health habits.**
Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

If you have any questions about the information provided, please let us know. Have a safe and blessed weekend.

Thank you.

Rick Ouellette
Director of Communications
Catholic Diocese of Memphis