



HOLY FAMILY
Catholic Community

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To: Holy Family Staff and Congregation
From: Fr. Ryan Pruess
Re: Distribution of Communion/Sign of Peace during the cold and flu season
Date: February 25, 2020

I'd like to take a moment and offer the following guidelines regarding the distribution of communion and the sign of peace during the cold and flu season.

Distribution of Communion:

During the cold and flu season, as with any other season, communion will continue to be distributed under both forms. We will continue to offer communion in its "fuller form" (General Instruction of the Roman Missal "GIRM" 281) of consecrated bread and wine. However, there may be some exceptions made that will be left up to the discretion of the presider.

- 1) If the priest celebrant has the practice of sharing the presider chalice with communicants and the priest celebrant's health is compromised, the priest's chalice should be restricted to him only and not used to distribute the Precious Blood to other members of the assembly.
- 2) It is the decision of each individual communicant to receive the Precious Blood. Always keep in mind that some communicants may ONLY receive from the cup because of particular medical conditions. Those who suspect symptoms that may signal impending flu or cold should refrain from receiving the Precious Blood and receive only the Body of Christ in the species of the consecrated host until the person is well again.
- 3) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should practice good hygiene before leaving their seat to minister communion. EMHC should sanitize their hands PRIOR to coming up into the sanctuary. EMHCs should carry a small alcohol-based hand gel and use it at their seat immediately following the Sign of Peace before they approach the altar to perform their ministry.
- 4) Sacristans and others who hygienically wash the vessels after they have been ritually purified should be sure to use soap and hot water to wash the vessels.

Sign of Peace:

The GIRM #82 says that the Sign of Peace is an integral part of the Roman Catholic Mass. The invitation to offer a sign that is meant to express "ecclesial communion and mutual charity" (GIRM 82) could hardly be seen as inappropriate except in extreme circumstances. In such extreme instances there are still options available that would preclude the omission of the exchange of peace.

Since the General Instruction of the Roman Missal does not specify a particular manner of offering a sign of peace, and since even under ordinary circumstances some people are not able to shake hands due to medical conditions, one might choose among a number of other options instead of shaking hands to:

- 1) Make a reverential bow of the head to the people around you and say, "Peace be with you."
- 2) Simply say "Peace be with you" without any gesture.

As with all things, personal prudence and responsibility should always prevail when individuals are experiencing illness or a compromised immune system.