

Archbishop Lori Announces Liturgical Guidelines to Protect the Faithful against Illness

Archbishop William E. Lori has announced the following guidelines for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy during this flu season and in light of concerns about the Coronavirus. These guidelines reinforce recommended practices to reduce the transmission of illnesses and their implementation is left to the discretion of each pastor, with the exception of numbers 1 and 2, which are compulsory. The guideline (number 5) re: holy water has also been updated. These guidelines are in effect until further notice.

1. The distribution of the Precious Blood for the faithful MUST be suspended, with an exception made for those priests, deacons, and others who, for medical reasons, must receive from the chalice only. The Catholic Church teaches that Christ is received, whole and entire, even under only one species.
2. The exchange of the Sign of Peace MUST be offered without any physical contact. When the priest celebrant extends the invitation for the sign of peace, the faithful, instead of a handshake, may bow or otherwise greet the persons nearby.
3. All ministers of Holy Communion should use hand sanitizer prior to the distribution of Holy Communion. Alcohol-based or other appropriate waterless hand sanitizers should be made available on the credence table for such use.
4. While the faithful retain the option of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue or in the hand, all ministers of Holy Communion are advised to distribute the consecrated Hosts with particular care, being cautious, as far as possible, not to touch the tongue or the hand of the communicant.
5. Holy Water fonts may be drained and remain empty at the discretion of each pastor. If they are not to remain empty, they must be drained, cleaned with a disinfectant, and re-filled with holy water on a regular basis. Please note that the removed holy water should be disposed of appropriately in the *sacrarium* or poured into the ground.
6. Parishioners should be reminded that if they are ill, or suspect they are ill with a contagious illness, they are not bound by the Sunday Mass obligation. They should remain at home and return to church when they are well.
7. Additional precautions should be used in the maintenance of worship spaces and church halls, in particular the disinfecting of areas or items which come into contact with hands, such as handrails, restroom areas, and the tops of pews.