



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PHOENIX

Flu and Coronavirus / Covid-19 Liturgical Guidelines

Diocese of Phoenix
Updated March 6, 2020

In order to promote safety and health in public worship and assist in alleviating undue anxiety among the faithful (especially the elderly), it seems prudent to reissue the following liturgical guidelines for the Diocese of Phoenix.

The Center for Disease Control together with the Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship remind us that the Flu and Coronavirus are spread through personal, physical contact with someone who is sick (either through inhaling the virus, or through hand-to-mouth transmission with a contaminated surface). The CDC says that the best prevention is self-isolation of people who are sick, avoiding close contact with others, cleaning hands frequently, and covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

Furthermore, the CDC recognizes various "levels" to health crises. These diocesan guidelines are based on the CDC's response to any potential crisis that may be brought on by the Flu or other infectious disease.

Level I: (heightened awareness, voluntary precautions)

Pastors/administrators of parishes or other institutions **may** implement the following or any combination of the following:

1. Encourage the Faithful who are sick to stay home.
Though it is true that it is a grave matter to miss mass on Sundays and holydays, this never applies to those who are ill, especially those who are contagious or display flu-like symptoms.
2. Distribute Holy Communion under the species of bread alone.
We receive the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ in its totality under the species of bread alone. Receiving both species is a fuller "sign" not a fuller reality. The distribution of the chalice could be a high risk for contamination and thus is not necessary for the faithful.
3. May invite communicants to receive on the hand.
Reception of Communion on the tongue could inadvertently contaminate the hands of those distributing Communion. However, individual communicants have the right to decide.

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4. Eliminate the optional exchange of peace.
Asking people to exchange the Sign of Peace without physical contact is to empty the ritual of meaning. Since this is an optional part of the liturgy, it is to be omitted rather than attempted without physical contact.
5. Require Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to sanitize hands before and after distribution.
6. Omit the spontaneous gesture of hand-holding during the Our Father.
There is no prescribed gesture for the People of God during the Our Father.
7. Do not hold Eucharistic and other liturgies in a daily mass chapel, if there is a larger church at the parish.
8. Refrain from using Holy Water fonts.

Level II: *(a seriously heightened situation including imposed restrictions by CDC or Arizona Health Officials or if a major outbreak appears in a Catholic parish or school)*

All items from “Level I” **become mandatory**. Additionally:

9. Ministers to the sick must carefully follow CDC regulations (masks, gloves, etc.) and any hospital or institution guidelines where they are serving.
10. All unnecessary contact between individuals or groups is to be eliminated (e.g. greeting people after mass, coffee and donuts, etc.).
11. People with compromised immune systems are encouraged to stay home even on Sundays.

Level III: *(Endemic/critical health situation)*

Follow all CDC regulations for public gatherings which may include the temporary closing of parish schools and churches. In this case directives would be sent from the Bishop’s office.