

Influenza Outbreak Response: Step 1

Reminders:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze (or cough/sneeze into your elbow – not your hand). Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water (using the appropriate technique for at least 20 seconds), especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Stay home if you get sick. If you do come to Mass, do not drink from the chalice or receive communion on the tongue. Share the sign of peace by a bow or a wave; do not hold hands with others.

*From the Office of Worship of the Diocese of Youngstown
with gratitude to the Diocese of Davenport for their assistance with this material*

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Participation at Mass:

- Sunday Obligation: The Obligation to attend Mass on Sunday and other Holy Days of Obligation (Canon 1247) is the ordinary expectation of Catholics. Obviously, extraordinary circumstances such as sickness, travel, or severe weather excuse the faithful from this obligation. If you are not feeling well, especially during this time of concern, please stay at home and do not risk spreading infection to others.
- Sign of Peace: Members of our congregation should not be offended if someone chooses not to shake the other person's hand at the sign of peace. If you are ill (and still come to Mass), the appropriate response to someone extending a sign of peace might be to bow to them and say, "Peace of Christ be with you," to avoid bodily contact or one might wave slightly at the other person.
- Reception of Holy Communion: While it is the teaching of the Church that the fullness of the Body and Blood of Christ is contained in the Holy Eucharist under the form of the Host that is distributed at Mass, the Church has also extended the privilege to receive communion in the form of wine. However, if you are feeling sick, please receive communion in the hand, and refrain from receiving communion under the form of the Blood of Christ.
- Pregnant Women and Persons with Compromised Immune Systems: Persons who have been directed by their medical advisors that they are particularly susceptible to infection (or to complications due to the flu in particular) may choose to refrain from any practices by which they might come in contact with germs, including shaking hands, receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, and drinking from the Chalice.

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