

Guidelines for H1N1 and Seasonal Flu Viruses and Liturgical Celebrations

Version 2

Along with the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control, the Virginia Health Department, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (see below), the Diocese of Richmond strongly recommends that the following precautionary measures be taken at liturgical celebrations.

The H1N1 virus (swine flu) as well as seasonal flu viruses are transmitted by airborne droplets and by contact. Those who are sick should not attend Mass or other large gatherings. If they do, they should follow the guidelines below, and also refrain from sharing in the cup. To miss Mass when one is ill is never a sin.

- Hospitality Ministers (Greeters and Ushers) should be encouraged to carefully wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer before and after their ministries of greeting others, taking up the collection, and passing out programs and bulletins.
- Sacristans should take similar precautions in their preparations for liturgy as well as in the care of vessels and linen after Mass.
- Altar servers should wash their hands before Mass.
- All ministers of the altar should take the same precautions.
- In lieu of a handshake at the Sign of Peace at Mass, people may smile or make a small bow of the head to others as a sign of reverence.
- In lieu of holding hands at the Lord's Prayer, people may pray with hands folded, or extended or raised in the traditional posture known as the *orans* gesture.
- No handshakes should be exchanged when the gifts are received.
- Holy water fonts should be regularly cleaned and the water replaced.