

Office of the Bishop

NOTICE

Date: April 30, 2009

To: All Priests and Deacons

RE: Swine Flu Preventive Measures for the Diocese of Tyler

I. PURPOSE

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the World Health Organization, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, have issued alert notices regarding the flu. Our concern is for the care, health and well being of all. Because we respect life, we must take preventive measures. Immediate steps should be taken to minimize spreading of germs (reducing contact and increasing hygiene). Therefore, I issue the following directives:

1. To pray is the first obligation we have to those who are sick or have died as a result of the flu. Prayers to God through the intercession of Archangels Michael and Raphael shall be used at all Masses. (See Appendix)
2. A person may have a great fear attending Mass where close contact with others occurs. If this is the case, I am issuing a special dispensation of the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation. This applies also to the elderly, children, and other persons with special health concerns.
3. Public Masses for Sunday and weekdays or gatherings such as schools, etc., will be suspended only upon request of Authorities when the first confirmed case of the flu is published in your county and city.
4. Catholic Charities will activate an Emergency Preparedness Plan for all parishes and missions in the Diocese. The Director shall coordinate efforts in collaboration with the Diocesan Finance Officer and the Chancellor.
5. Once the emergency nature of this situation has passed, I will re-institute our traditional means of sharing the sign of peace and norm of distributing communion from the cup at the celebration of the Eucharist within the Diocese of Tyler. Finally, if the situation worsens, I may have to issue more stringent measures commensurate with the degree of seriousness. These directives will be in effect until rescinded by me in writing.

II. PUBLIC SUNDAY AND DAILY MASS

To reduce contact and increase hygiene, I direct the following temporary measures at Mass and other Sacraments:

1. An announcement should be made before Mass begins and during the Mass as needed.
2. Please do not to shake hands during times of greetings prior to or after Mass.
3. Collections should be organized such that the basket does not go from one person to another.

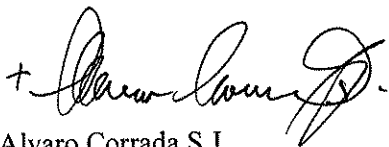
Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J., Bishop of Tyler

4. The faithful are directed not hold hands during the reciting of the Our Father, as is already the Liturgical Norm of the Missal (GIRM) and the Diocese of Tyler.
5. The Sign of Peace shall be given without touching hands or kissing. This can be done with meaningful eye contact, smiles, or a bow of the head in reverence to one another.
6. All Ministers of Holy Communion shall wash their hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion. This can be done at the credence table or other suitable location designated by the Pastor. Washing shall be with soap and water, or alcohol based sanitizers. Disposable towels and disposal container shall be made available at the credence table.
7. I direct a temporary suspension of the reception of the Most Precious Blood including Intinction during Holy Communion. Communion is only to be given in the species of the consecrated bread.
8. The Presider shall be the only one that will receive the Precious Blood. He will use the main chalice and shall not offer it to Concelebrant Priests, assisting Deacons, or other ministers present at the sanctuary. If Concelebrants (priests) are present, a separate chalice will be prepared for them, and then only by Intinction will they receive the Precious Blood.
9. The faithful shall be given Communion in their hands, not on their tongue. Exceptions can be made for persons with strong personal reasons. A provision shall be made by the Pastor for persons with Celiac disease that can only receive Communion from the cup.
10. Non-communicants coming forward during Communion shall not be touched.
11. Handicap persons who need to receive the Eucharist on the tongue, or who need assistance in receiving the Eucharist should be attended. The minister(s) shall wash their hands prior to and after ministering to them.

III. OTHER SACRAMENTS

1. **BAPTISMS** can be postponed unless there is an immediate danger of death.
2. **ANOINTING OF THE SICK** is the obligation of all priests to administer this sacrament at all times and circumstances.
3. **CONFIRMATION.** The Imposition of Hands will be done in a group, not individually. Confirmands shall approach the Bishop in a single file for the Anointing. The Bishop and the Confirmand shall remain standing for the anointing and the Bishop will anoint the Confirmand on the forehead.

In Christ Jesus,



Alvaro Corrada S.J.
Bishop of Tyler

**APPENDIX TO FLU PREVENTIVE MEASURES
-DEVOTIONS TO THE ARCHANGELS-**

At the beginning of Mass, after the greeting by the Presider and just prior to the Penitential Rite, the following prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, shall be led by the Presider:

R. From illness, disease and harm. V. Deliver your people Lord.

Holy Michael the Archangel, prince of the heavenly host, help of the People of God, combated the evil serpent, cast him out of heaven and defends the Church of God, so that the gates of hell may not prevail against her; we ask you to assist us in our time of need. Intercede for us that we may be free from all harm and illness of mind, body and soul. In our weakness assist us by your power, that the enemy of humanity may never afflict us and that we may steadily resist and happily overcome all trials and tribulations. Amen.

At the end of Mass, just prior to the Final Blessing, the following prayer to St. Raphael the Archangel shall be led by the Presider:

R. Help us O God our deliverer. V. Free us Lord, for we are Yours.

Holy and glorious Archangel Saint Raphael, physician of God and illustrious by your gifts of wisdom and grace; we ask your intercession and seek your help in the trials of life. As you once assisted young Tobias, come to the help and assistance of the People of God who invoke you in our anxiety and need. May we be healed of our spiritual and physical infirmities and filled with the blessings of our heavenly Father that we may rejoice in the protection of His love and mercy. Amen.