



# DIOCESE of TYLER

## Liturgical Protocols for Flu and Cold Season

In response to questions from pastors regarding liturgical adaptations for the flu and cold season, the following guidelines and protocols are provided to the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Tyler.

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**Staying Home.** If parishioners are sick or already have any type of cold or flu-like symptoms, they are asked to stay home, both for their well-being and as an act of charity and consideration toward others. When individuals are ill, they are not bound by the Sunday Mass obligation. This reminder may be included in parish bulletins and announcements. Encouraging people who are at risk to stay away from large church gatherings is an extra step intended to maintain their health.

**Proper Hygiene.** Priests, deacons, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, ushers, and greeters should be especially reminded of the need to practice good hygiene. Ministers of Holy Communion should always wash their hands before Mass begins; a further precaution suggests using an alcohol-based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion (if done, this should be discreet and not “ritualized”).

**Cleaning.** The water in holy water fonts should be regularly emptied and refreshed, and the fonts should be cleaned and disinfected. Common surfaces on church property (door handles, restroom fixtures, etc.) should be frequently cleaned and disinfected.

**Sign of Peace.** At the discretion of each individual, a bow of the head may replace the customary shaking of hands during the Sign of Peace.

**Distribution of Holy Communion.** The faithful should not receive from the chalice if they feel ill. The faithful should also consider receiving Holy Communion in the hand rather than on the tongue if they feel ill.\* All ministers of Holy Communion are advised to distribute the consecrated hosts with care, being cautious not to touch the tongue or the hand of the communicant.

(\* These decisions are the choice of each individual communicant. Pastors may find it opportune to remind the faithful that in receiving either Eucharistic species, the whole Christ is received.)

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With the above practices in place, no other liturgical adaptations for flu and cold season are foreseen at this time in the Diocese of Tyler. The diocesan bishop should always be consulted regarding any changes or restriction of options in the celebration of the liturgy.

Peyton Low  
Chancellor  
January 2, 2019