

# Liturgical-Pastoral Suggestions and Guidelines in the Event of an Outbreak of Flu

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*Archdiocese of Milwaukee  
Office for Worship and the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission  
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- A) All ministers of communion, ordinary and extraordinary, are to be reminded of the importance of proper hand-washing before and after distributing communion, and of proper technique to be used in distributing communion. This may be done in formation sessions or by written memo.
1. The person responsible for preparing the gifts before Mass is to be reminded to wash his or her hands carefully prior to touching the hosts and pouring the wine. If that person is ill, a substitute must be found.
  2. Parishes may have bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for communion ministers. For example, these may be placed in the front pews (or other discreet but convenient place) for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to use on their way to the sanctuary and after ministering communion.
  3. Ordinary Ministers are reminded to wash their hands properly before the beginning of Mass. In addition, a bottle of hand sanitizer may be placed at the credence table (or other discreet but convenient place) for the Ordinary Ministers to wash their hands after the Sign of Peace.
  4. Ministers are to use proper technique in distributing communion. For example:
    - i. Care must be taken not to touch the mouth, tongue, or teeth of a communicant choosing to receive communion on the tongue. If there is any significant accidental contact, ministers should change the hand with which they are distributing communion. If there is gross contamination, the minister is to wash his/her hands.
    - ii. It is the decision of the pastor whether or not Communion will be distributed under one or both species. The choice to receive from the Cup or to refrain from the Cup is a personal choice. The Church teaches that Christ is present, whole and entire, in either species. (CCC #1377)
    - iii. When ministering the Cup, ministers must take care to wipe both the inside and outside lip of the chalice, to turn the chalice before the next person receives, and to move the purificator for each wipe so the same location on the purificator is not used over and over.
    - iv. Ministers are reminded that self-intinction is not allowed.
  5. The person responsible for the care of the vessels after Mass is to ensure that they are properly cleaned. After being purified according to the rubrics, Mass vessels should be washed with hot, soapy water.
  6. Purificators are also to be laundered according to liturgical norms. After soaking in water (which is then poured into the *sacarium*), the purificators are laundered normally. Hot water and laundry detergent may be used.
- B) While there has never been a documented case of an infectious disease being transmitted through the sharing of the Cup, the parishioners ought to be regularly reminded (in the bulletin, by announcement, or in formation sessions—such as RCIA, preparation for First Communion, or adult formation groups) that if one is ill he/she should stay home, or at least refrain from the Cup. They are also to be reminded that self-intinction is never allowed.
- C) For information about what the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops produced on this topic, please go to: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-resources/influenza-and-the-liturgy.cfm>. There you will find “Ten Questions on Influenza/Swine Flu and the Liturgy.”