



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

The Diocese of Syracuse is currently monitoring the situation regarding the coronavirus. At this time, there is no need to curtail or suspend any practices at Mass. Nevertheless, the following are provided for your consideration.

THE CHURCH'S LITURGICAL RESPONSE TO INFLUENZA

Mass attendance is not obligatory for those who are ill (*Code of Canon Law 1983*, c. 898; *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*, 2181). Those who are ill not only can but should remain at home and participate – as they are able – by watching a broadcast of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on TV or YouTube and by making a spiritual communion.

Those at Mass concerned they may be getting ill are encouraged to: (1) refrain from extending hands at the Sign of Peace (some other appropriate gesture may be extended instead – e.g., a smile or nod of the head), (2) receive Holy Communion in the hand rather than on the tongue, and (3) refrain from receiving the Precious Blood from the chalice.

Those who distribute Holy Communion (i.e., priest, deacon, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion) are to practice good hygiene, particularly by washing their hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion. They should also take care not to touch the hand or tongue of any communicant.

The pastor of a parish may decide to suspend the distribution of the Precious Blood from the chalice. It is important to remember that the whole Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, under each of the species of bread and wine (*CCC*, 1390). Pastors may also decide to suspend the sign of peace and / or the use of holy water fonts.

Holy water fonts should be cleaned, and the water changed on a regular basis.

A JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE USCCB, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, AND THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES:

“As communities and public health officials respond to the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in China and closely monitor its presence and progression in other parts of the world, **we join in solidarity and prayer for those impacted or working to treat those infected by the disease.** The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Relief Services, and the Catholic Health Association of the United States hope that governments will work together in partnership to improve all nations’ capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to this virus.”

“The Catholic Church in the United States stands in solidarity with those affected by the coronavirus and their families, health workers who are valiantly trying to diagnose and treat patients, and those under quarantine awaiting results of their screening for the virus. We offer our **prayers for healing and support** those organizations, both domestic and international, working to provide medical supplies and assistance to address this serious risk to public health.”

“In early February, the Holy See sent 700,000 respiratory masks to China to help prevent the spread of the disease. Within the United States, **Catholic healthcare providers are at the front line of providing treatment and care to those impacted by the virus.**”

“We also **commend the U.S. government** for transporting more than 17 tons of donated medical supplies to China. This response to the novel coronavirus demonstrates the critical importance of the need to work together and to invest in crucial health care systems here and in other countries, thus preventing and responding to communitywide emergencies. We **urge the U.S. Congress to support these efforts** by protecting access to domestic health care safety net programs and by providing additional emergency international assistance to areas impacted by the virus.”

“We also urge individuals to **stay informed** as information becomes available by going to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> .”

SAMPLE PETITIONS FROM THE USCCB COMMITTEE ON DIVINE WORSHIP

For those who are suffering in the current outbreak of sickness that they might be healed, and for the happy repose of all who have died from this sickness in recent weeks; let us pray to the Lord.

For scientists, health professionals, public officials, and all who are serving the common good in this difficult and uncertain time, that they will be filled with wisdom and understanding; let us pray to the Lord.

That in times of illness our merciful and loving Father will strengthen our faith and trust in his goodness and divine providence; let us pray to the Lord.

That our compassionate Father would touch all affected by the current outbreak with healing and peace; let us pray to the Lord.