

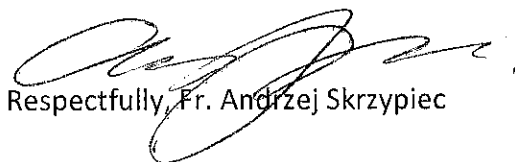
Influenza precautions.

Due to the increasing severity of the influenza season, I would propose the following steps be taken in regards to the celebration of Mass:

- During the Sign of Peace, instead of shaking hands or hugging as is often practiced, please simply nod your head toward one another and avoid bodily contact.
- While some persons have the practice of holding hands during the Our Father, they are asked to refrain at this time. They may extend hands toward Heaven or fold their hands—folded hands being the liturgical norm.
- While Holy Communion is still distributed under both species, please refrain from receiving from the chalice if you feel even slightly “under the weather”; The Church and its Councils have always recognized that both the Lord’s Body and Blood as present even in either species alone.
- It is encouraged that the reception of the Consecrated Host will take form of receiving the Sacred Host in the hand; this is actually the norm in the U.S. per the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). This will limit contact with saliva and the potential spread of the influenza virus. It is requested that persons who insist on receiving the Eucharist on the tongue wait to the end of Holy Communion in order to be the final communicants, limiting possible virus transmission. This is requested as an act of charity toward their brothers and sisters in the congregation.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands just prior to distribution of Holy Communion, and such is recommended also after distribution for their own protection. An anti-bacterial gel or hand wipes may be used.
- Those who are sick, sneezing or coughing are highly encouraged to stay home. Sunday television Masses are available in English and Spanish. It is not sinful to miss Mass on Sundays due to illness.

The influenza virus is virulent, causing deaths each year especially among the very young and the elderly. The above suggestions are meant not to limit expression of faith, but are proposed rather as a preventive measure against a widespread and potentially deadly disease. Thus we ask cooperation in laying aside optional personal preferences for service and charity toward your neighbor.

These precautions will cease when the situation improves.



Respectfully, Fr. Andrzej Skrzypiec