



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

Memorandum

TO: All Clergy, Religious Communities, and Parishes

FROM: Rev. Alfred Omar Guerrero, Director, Office of Worship

DATE: November 7, 2022

RE: **Updated Covid-19 Liturgical Directives and Cold & Flu Guidelines**

With the state of Hawaii loosening its COVID restriction policies, it seems timely that we do the same for the Diocese. After discussing this with the Presbyteral Council at its October meeting and with the approval of Bishop Larry Silva, **all remaining Covid-19 liturgical restrictions are lifted except for the suspension of the distribution of the Precious Blood to the congregation.** However, if you have individuals in your parish who have Celiac disease and can only receive Communion from the cup, a simple means of allowing them to receive from the cup should be planned. The use of a face mask is optional.

The cold and flu seasons are unpredictable in several ways. Although epidemics of the flu happen every year, the timing, severity, and length of the season vary from one year to another. At this time, it has been decided not to put any restrictions at Mass except for the temporary suspension of the distribution of the Precious Blood to the congregation. Local pastoral discretion and care should be practiced as necessary.

It is important to remind the faithful that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not apply to those who are ill, especially those who suffer from a contagious disease. It is a sign of charity and consideration for themselves and others that those with flu-like symptoms remain at home.

Ministers also become ill; therefore, to avoid celebrating Mass when ill, priests should consider alternatives that may be available to them in such circumstances. A short list of priests who could be called in case of need should be prepared at all parishes.

Within the parishes, common sense and maintaining good habits must be used:

- Check and fill hand-soap dispensers in all restrooms of the church. Have available hand sanitizer in your church vestibule.
- Maintain clean, fresh holy water and holy water fonts. While blessing oneself with holy water is a commendable practice to recall our Baptism, it is not

necessary and can be omitted by those who do not feel comfortable sharing the font.

- Clean and sanitize places and things in the church that are touched frequently.

Below are a few resources which may be helpful, including:

- A suggested announcement for the beginning of Mass.
- Sample bulletin announcements, which you are free to revise in any way you find pastorally helpful.

Please feel free to contact me at the Office of Worship, 808-585-3342 or email at alguerrero@rcchawaii.org should you have any questions.

SUGGESTED ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE MASS

During the cold and flu season, all parishioners are reminded to use common sense. Those who are ill are not obligated to attend Mass and should stay at home to recover. If you are feeling ill today, please refrain from offering your hand to others at the sign of peace. No one who fears infection should feel obligated to share the sign of peace with a physical gesture. We pray for the health and recovery of all who are ill and not with us today.

SAMPLE PARISH BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Winter Cold and Flu Season

As always, you are reminded to use common sense for your health and safety during the annual cold and flu season. If you are feeling ill or think you may have been exposed to a virus, you should refrain from coming to Mass. In the same way, you should refrain from offering your hand to others at the sign of peace. A smile and a heartfelt "Peace be with you" should suffice. All of us must be aware of such sensitive matter in the intimate life of the Christian community and we should expect that some will refrain from a physical expression of the sign of peace out of care of our well-being and not out of unkindness or lack of piety.