



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DATE: JANUARY 14, 2020
TO: PRIESTS ON OFFICAL ASSIGNMENT
FROM: BISHOP FRANK J. DEWANE *F. J. Dewane*
RE: FLU PRECAUTIONS/LITURGY IN THE DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

All parishes/missions/chapels in the Diocese of Venice in Florida are being asked to take the following precautions to help mitigate the spread and effects of the Flu:

- The Faithful should be encouraged to share the Sign of Peace without touching hands. This can be done with meaningful eye contact, smiles, or a bow of the head in reverence to one another. Further, please note that the Sign of Peace is an optional practice and may be omitted.
- The Precious Blood is not to be shared with the Faithful during Mass, neither from the Chalice, nor by way of intinction, until further notice. However, if you have individuals in your Parish who are only able to receive Holy Communion from the Chalice, they should be permitted to determine whether or not they are comfortable receiving the Precious Blood at this time. If they are, a simple means of allowing them to receive Communion should be offered.
- Priests, Deacons, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be reminded of the importance of practicing good hygiene. All Ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands both before and after Mass.
- The Faithful should be encouraged *not* to hold hands during the recitation of the Our Father.

While the flu season persists, the above rules are to be followed in all parishes of the Diocese of Venice.

In addition to the above, I would like to make the following suggestions regarding pastorally implementing these temporary changes within the parishes:

- Your pastoral judgment and pastoral approach are critical to ensuring that these temporary changes are seen as being in the best interest of the faithful, as well ensuring that no one with special circumstances is excluded.
- Parishioners should be reminded not to come to Mass when they are truly ill.
- Celebrants and Deacons should carefully wash their hands before and after Mass.
- Greeters and Ushers should be encouraged to carefully wash their hands before and after greeting others, taking up the collection, and passing out bulletins.
- Should a non-communicant present themselves for a blessing, it should be given without touching them.
- It may be necessary to announce these temporary changes more than once, as some Parishioners may not be present for the initial announcements.
- This is an important time to pay attention to the members of your community who have special needs or who need assistance in receiving Holy Communion. Approaching them at the Communion Rite will ensure they are not excluded.