



ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE
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OFFICE OF
THE ARCHBISHOP

April 30, 2009

Dear Monsignor/Father:

As you are aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has expressed concern about the spread of the swine flu virus in the United States. Because of the risks associated with the virus, I ask that you take the following temporary precautions for the celebration of Mass:

- The faithful should be encouraged to share the sign of peace without physical contact. A smile, a wave or a nod of the head would be appropriate.
- Communion should preferably be given only under the species of the consecrated host, and communicants should be encouraged to receive in their hands rather than on the tongue. If, however, there are communicants in your parish who have Celiac disease and can receive Communion only from the cup, they should be allowed to decide for themselves whether to receive from the cup despite potential health risks.
- The faithful should be encouraged not to hold hands during the Our Father.

I ask that you announce these precautions at the beginning of Mass and, if appropriate because of late arrivals, during the homily or immediately before the Our Father. It would be helpful to reassure the faithful that the traditional method of sharing the sign of peace and means of distributing Communion will be restored as soon as the risk of swine flu has passed.

In addition to these measures, I suggest that priests, deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion carefully wash their hands before and after Mass.

If future conditions suggest that more stringent health measures need be taken, I will supplement these requests. Meanwhile, I ask that you implement these measures with a pastoral sensitivity that assures the faithful access to the Eucharist.

Thank you for your cooperation with these efforts to make the spiritual nourishment of the Eucharist available to parishioners in a way that does not undermine the physical health of the community.

Be assured of my continued prayers and grateful best wishes.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Henry J. Mansell*

Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell
Archbishop of Hartford