



Diocese of Scranton
Memo on Widespread Influenza Activity

*Due to the widespread influenza (flu) activity currently taking place across the state of Pennsylvania and our nation, the faithful of the Diocese of Scranton are urged to observe the necessary standard precautions in protecting the health of others during this flu season. Because influenza is a contagious respiratory illness, **some basic measures that can help to prevent the spread of influenza include:***

- Practicing good hygiene, especially by washing your hands frequently with soap and water, and if possible, to use a hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose
- Covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough
- Getting a flu vaccine each year

Parishioners are reminded that:

- If they are sick, especially with flu-like symptoms, they should stay home for their own well-being and that of others.
- If parishioners are sick or suspect they are sick with a contagious illness, they are not bound by the Sunday Mass obligation.
- The faithful should also be reminded that they should not receive from the chalice if they are feeling ill.

At the pastor's/parish life coordinator's discretion, the following directives may be set forth temporarily until the influenza activity in our region subsides:

- Parishioners are urged, but not required, to receive Holy Communion on the hand instead of the mouth
- Offering the Precious Blood to the faithful at Mass may be suspended, except for those who receive Holy Communion from the chalice out of medical necessity. Church teaching states that Christ, whole and entire, is received even under one form of Holy Communion.
- Exchanging the Sign of Peace without physical contact (i.e. shaking hands) – parishioners may still exchange nods, offer a verbal greeting, a smile, or a simple bow of the head

For more information on influenza and the Liturgy, please visit the United State Conference of Catholic Bishops website at www.usccb.org. You may also want to visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.CDC.gov/flu for up-to-date information regarding the influenza activity in your area.