



Seasonal Flu and the Celebration of Mass 2011-2012

The first cases of influenza have been reported in Massachusetts. Starting this weekend (December 3 and 4, 2011) and until further notice, our priests, friars and staff are asking all of us to take the following temporary precautions to help prevent the spread of the flu within our parish community. The seasonal flu season starts now and often goes into the month of May.

- When you feel ill, stay at home until you are fully recovered. While there is an obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation (Canon 1247), prudence dictates that if people are ill or suspect they are ill, they should NOT attend Mass, so as to prevent the possible spread of infection. This is to protect their well-being and that of the community.
- Everyone (including greeters/ushers) should use verbal greetings only and not handshakes.
- During the Sign of Peace you should refrain from any physical contact with people near you; instead, you are encouraged to greet them with words of peace, a nod, a bow or some other appropriate gesture.
- At communion time, the faithful are strongly urged to receive the Body of Christ in their HANDS and NOT on the tongue.
- The Blood of Christ will not be administered to the faithful at communion time. Communion is to be given only in the Body of Christ. Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species (CCC 1377), that is, the Body of Christ and in the Blood of Christ. In the United States, dipping the consecrated bread into the cup is already NOT allowed. For those with celiac disease, please speak to either the priest or Br. Damian.
- If you feel the urge to sneeze during mass, please cover your mouth and nose by sneezing into a tissue. If you do not have a tissue, please sneeze into your upper sleeve at the crease of your elbow, not into your hands. A sneeze can project up to 12 feet away if you do not cover your mouth and nose.

In cases where the faithful are unable to attend Sunday Mass due to illness, you are encouraged to pray at home. Please note that in the Archdiocese of Boston Daily Mass can be seen LIVE on Catholic TV and Boston's WBXP, Channel 68 weekdays at 9:30AM and Saturdays on Catholic TV at 9:30AM. The online Mass is also rebroadcast on Catholic TV at 7 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. On Saturday the Mass is televised at 7 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. Sunday Masses air at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Finally, although Fr. Dennis, Fr. Richard and Brother Damian enjoy greeting each and every parishioner who wishes to do so with a handshake after mass, please consider following the above precautions when greeting them. They have the highest risk of contracting flu or the common cold from us as parishioners. Remember you can be contagious with flu or other viruses before you even have symptoms of fever, cough or a runny nose. In closing we ask that you kindly remember in your prayers those most vulnerable to these seasonal illnesses; young children, the elderly and those who are frail or poor in health. May they and all who are ill be comforted and cared for and may the Lord give them strength and restore their health.