



Archdiocese of Anchorage

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Office of the Archbishop

MEMORANDUM

TO: Priests, Deacons, Parish Directors and Administrators

FROM: Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz, OMI

DATE: April 30, 2009

RE: Swine Flu Precautions

Please read the following at all of your weekend Masses and begin the implementation immediately.

With the rapid spread of the influenza/swine flu, I believe it wise at this time to take appropriate precautions at our Catholic Masses. Effective immediately, I would ask that the following measure be taken in the Catholic Churches of the Archdiocese of Anchorage for both Sunday and weekday Masses:

- 1) Suspend the handshake of peace. We will bow to each other at the Sign of Peace;
- 2) Suspend the holding of hands during the Lords Prayer;
- 3) Distribution of precious blood from a common cup is optional;
- 4) Eucharistic Ministers should use an alcohol based hand gel prior to distributing Communion and following.

These requests will be in effect until further notice. To date, no cases of the virus have been reported in Alaska. Hopefully this will continue to be the situation.

Finally, I encourage everyone to use common sense. If you feel ill or are ill, please do not come to Mass or participate in any parish activities. You are exempt from your obligation to participate in the Eucharist when you are ill.

If you or your parishioners are interested, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has more information on their web site. The link to that is: <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy>