

# Good Health Practices for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

With the onset of the cold and flu season the Office of Worship offers to all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion the following reminders on good health practices and the administration of the Communion cup at Mass.

## Preventing the Flu – *Take Care of Yourself*

Common sense is most important for the prevention of a cold or the flu. The following health precautions are strongly recommended to limit your risk of infection.

- **Get vaccinated.** The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the flu vaccination, especially for those who are at high risk: young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions & the elderly.
- **Stay home when sick.** There is no sin if you miss Mass because you are sick or taking care of someone who is sick.
- **Cover your mouth and nose.** When you cough or sneeze, use a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash after you use it (or use your sleeve if a tissue is not available).
- **Wash your hands often.** Clean your hands regularly with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Stay home an additional 24 hours.** If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, the CDC recommends that you stay home for an additional 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of a fever-reducing medication.
- **Limit contact with others while sick.** If you are feeling sick or you are at risk for infection you should refrain from the Communion cup and perhaps shaking people's hands at the sign of peace. (If someone chooses to refrain from the handshake, be gracious and considerate.)

## REVIEW – Administering the Communion Cup

Even though the reception of the Precious Blood from the Communion cup is a much fuller sign of the Eucharistic banquet, the choice to receive from the cup is left to the individual communicant. The CDC has indicated that if the above mentioned preventative health habits are followed and all ministers of Holy Communion are cognizant of the reminders below the chances for infection are greatly diminished.

- **Stay home when you are sick.** Find a replacement.
- **Wash your hands.** Wash your hands before Mass or use an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution before distributing Holy Communion.
- **Use all of the purificator.** Open the purificator fully and use a clean portion of the purificator to wipe the inside and outside rims of the cup after each communicant has received.
- **Turn the Cup.** Give the cup a ¼ to ⅓ turn before presenting it to the next communicant.

While the flu vaccine is still one of the best preventative measures, reliable information, good health habits, getting plenty of rest, nutritious eating, exercise, and managing stress will go a long way toward reducing the risk of infection during the cold and flu season.