

H1N1 Influenza 2009-10

Preventing the Spread of Influenza in the Archdiocese of Edmonton

In our mission to care for our brothers and sisters as Christ cares for us, it is a collective responsibility to prevent the spread of physical disease. As the fall influenza season approaches, we are reminded once again of this responsibility.

As a result of regular communication with provincial health officials, the Archdiocese of Edmonton is implementing a number of liturgical restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of the H1N1 influenza. These measures take effect immediately and will remain in effect until further notice:

- During any celebrations of the Mass, the liturgical exchange of a sign of peace will be omitted.
- The Precious Blood will not be distributed from the chalice.
- The reception of the Body of Christ will be limited to the hands only.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must wash their hands before Mass begins and avoid touching their mouth, nose and eyes during Mass. All ministers must sanitize their hands immediately before distributing Communion.
- All holy water fonts are to remain empty.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizing solution and tissues are to be available at church entrances.
- Out of respect for their brothers and sisters, parishioners should not attend Mass if they have any signs of illness, especially a cough or fever.
- Pastoral care team members who bring the Blessed Sacrament to shut-ins should not attend any homes where influenza is known or suspected to be present.

Those who stay at home are encouraged to pray and reflect on the Sunday readings if they are well enough. They can also pray the rosary or other devotions, or watch the televised Sunday Mass and make a Spiritual Communion. The televised Mass is broadcast on Salt+Light TV and streamed on the Internet at <http://www.saltandlighttv.org> at 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. each Sunday.

It would be appropriate for all of us to offer prayers appealing for the healing grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ for those who are sick and suffering at this time.

Yours in Christ,

Richard W. Smith
✠Archbishop of Edmonton

September 24, 2009

Resources

Accurate information and preparedness are the best defences against a serious outbreak of illness such as pandemic influenza. Taking precautions before illness strikes your home or community makes good sense, much like having a first aid kit or smoke detectors in your home. Following are some useful resources:

Alberta Health and Wellness H1N1 Website - Resources and latest information

- Information for Families and Individuals - What you need to know about recognizing influenza and the impact a serious outbreak can have on you.
- Staying Healthy Tipsheet - Good advice on how to stay healthy during flu season
- Faith-based and Community Organizations Planning Checklist -

A good tool to help parishes prepare for a serious outbreak of pandemic influenza

- Family and Individuals Planning Checklist - A good tool to help families and individuals prepare for a serious outbreak of pandemic influenza

Government of Canada H1N1 Flu Website - Updates, information and additional multilingual resources