

LET'S TALK ABOUT HEALTH CONCERNS

With heightened discussion about COVID-19 virus and with an extended Influenza season this year, I thought it prudent to review some of the practical principles that affect us as a congregation.

1. Use your common sense. If you have cold symptoms – even if it is the sniffles – it is better for you to stay home and not be present to the church community until symptoms have subsided. For the sake of everybody else, don't "tough it out." This is especially true of parents in relationship to your children who might be experiencing cold symptoms in relationship to any of our programs.
2. Ministers of the liturgy should never exercise their ministry when they are not feeling up to par. Use the ministry software to ask for a substitute. There are also hand sanitizer stations as you enter the sanctuary, at the credence table and in the Work Sacristy for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist to use before and after distributing Communion.
3. If people temporarily refrain from holding hands or shaking hands during Mass, respect that decision. A profound nod of the head, a bow, an elbow bump and a smile might be a good substitute until an individual is comfortable again with an appropriate gesture.
4. While we have discussed the CDC's findings regarding the safety of sharing the common chalice (*American Journal of Infection Control*: Vol. 26, pp. 538 – 539 and *Journal of Infection*: Vol. 16, pp. 3 – 23), if one is experiencing even mild symptoms that include coughing or nasal involvement, refraining from drinking from the chalice would be a helpful choice until symptoms have cleared.
5. At the same time, receiving the Eucharistic Bread in the hand is proportionally far more sanitary than having a minister place it in your mouth, which potentially contaminates the minister's fingers and the

communicants who follow you. You might adopt that same discipline until there are no symptoms.

6. Hand sanitizer is available at the doorways of the church as you enter and leave the building. The holy water fonts are treated with a little NaCl and we have been told the virus is not sustained in water.
7. The pews in the church and the chapel are sanitized weekly.
8. Should there be significant shifts in the overall health of our area, we will revisit these simple guidelines and initiate any appropriate changes. Up to this point, good, sensible, personal choices are what appears most necessary.

Father Frank Cancro
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