



# ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

June 11, 2009

Reverend Fathers,

In April, I wrote to you regarding the Swine Flu (H1N1). I indicated that the Archdiocese of Denver had a measured response for general precautions and liturgical protocols if the World Health Organization raised the pandemic threat to level 6. Since my last communication on this matter, the Archdiocesan Pandemic Planning Committee has met several times to fine-tune our protocols. The pandemic committee has recently decided to link our response to the Center for Disease Control threat levels and the local health agencies determination of the severity of the H1N1 in our region, rather than to those of the WHO.

Today, the WHO raised the pandemic level to phase 6. Because our response is now linked to the CDC and the local health agency, the previously established list of precautions and protocols sent to you will be implemented only if the severity increases and circumstances warrant.

However, effective immediately, and until advised differently by the Director of Liturgy, I ask that the following precautions and protocols be implemented in all missions and parishes in the Archdiocese of Denver.

## I. General Precautions

Parishioners should be encouraged to stay home out of respect for their brothers and sisters at the first sign of illness. This announcement might be communicated through pulpit announcement or explained in greater detail in your weekly bulletin.

Hand washing is a necessary and effective means of preventing the delivery of infectious material (e.g., nasal secretions, saliva or other bodily fluids that may contain viruses) from soiled hands to the mouth, nose, or eyes, where it can enter the body. Cleaning one's hands with soap and water removes potentially infectious material from one's skin. Hands should be cleaned before preparing food and eating, after touching one's face, and handling soiled material (e.g., used tissue, lavatory surfaces and door knobs), shaking hands, coughing and sneezing, and using the toilet. Parish janitorial staff should begin cleaning door knobs, common surfaces, drinking fountains, etc., at least daily with disinfectants.

## II. Liturgical Protocol

All EMHC's **must** sanitize their hands with a waterless hand gel or disinfectant wipes before the distribution of Holy Communion. This practice must be carefully choreographed so that the reverence of the Mass is maintained with this additional practice. Pastors might consider a small table outside the sanctuary with waterless, alcohol-based hand gel or wipes for easy access and an unobtrusive application.

Pastors should make sure that vessels used at Mass, once purified, are thoroughly washed with soap and hot water after use.

The above precautions and protocols are the first tier response to the evolving set of circumstances. Should the H1N1 virus continue to spread in a significant way in the United States, additional measures will be taken.

If you have questions please call the Office of Liturgy at 303-715-3162.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Denver