



ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD  
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OFFICE OF  
THE ARCHBISHOP

## ***MEMORANDUM***

To: Parishes and Offices of the Archdiocese of Hartford  
From: Archbishop Henry J. Mansell  
Date: September 8, 2009  
Re: H1N1 Virus

As you know, the potential threat posed by the H1N1 virus has become a cause for concern throughout the United States and beyond. It is important that we be cognizant of this risk and prepare ourselves to address it. To that end I ask that the following guidelines be implemented:

- Liturgy: These include the guidelines established in my letter dated April 30, 2009. Specifically:
  - The faithful should be encouraged to share the sign of peace without physical contact. A smile, a wave or a nod of the head would be appropriate.
  - Communion should preferably be given only under the species of the consecrated host, and communicants should be encouraged to receive in their hands rather than on the tongue. If, however, there are communicants in your parish who have Celiac disease and can receive Communion only from the cup, they should be allowed to decide for themselves whether to receive from the cup despite potential health risks.
  - Provision should be made for all ministers of Holy Communion to wash their hands carefully both before and after distributing Communion.
  - The faithful should be encouraged not to hold hands during the Our Father.
- Faith formation and schools: Directives from the Office of Catholic Schools and the Office of Religious Education should be implemented. Furthermore, measures recommended by the state and local government for public schools should be followed. Religious education programs should take similar actions, taking into account the differences between a religious education program and a school.

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- Employees: It is recommended that the action steps suggested in the Government Pandemic Flu Response Plan ([www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)) be taken as appropriate, namely:
- Sick employees should stay home.
  - Sick employees at work should be advised to go home.
  - Encourage your employees to wash their hands often
  - Encourage your employees to cover their coughs and sneezes.
  - Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact.
  - Encourage employees to get vaccinated.
  - Protect employees who are at higher risk for complications of flu.
  - Prepare for increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members and plan ways for essential business functions to continue.
  - Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps.
  - Prepare for the possibility of school dismissals or temporary closure of child care programs.

If future conditions suggest that more stringent health measures need be taken, I will supplement these guidelines. The overarching principles to be observed in confronting this situation are an awareness of the serious health risks that the H1N1 virus presents and a pastoral sensitivity to the spiritual well-being of the faithful, particularly their access to the Sacraments.

Thank you for your cooperation with these efforts to continue your vital work in a way that does not undermine the physical health of the community.

+ Henry J. Mansell