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MEMO

TO: Priests, Deacons, and Liturgy Coordinators
FROM: Bishop Daniel F. Walsh
DATE: April 30, 2009

Since the United States government has declared a health emergency in the last few days as a result of the *Swine Influenza* virus circulating in the United States and Mexico and at the behest of our insurance carrier, Arthur J. Gallagher, Risk Management Services, Inc., I request that all our parishes observe the following precautions during the celebration of the Mass in order to help mitigate the effects of this influenza in our communities:

1. The Faithful are to be encouraged not to hold hands during the recitation of the Our Father.
2. For the Sign of Peace the Faithful are to be encouraged to give a greeting that does not involve shaking hands or touching.
3. The Faithful are to be encouraged to receive Holy Communion in their hand and not on the tongue.
4. The Faithful are not to receive the Species of the Consecrated wine – the Precious Blood during Mass. Should an individual have celiac disease and can only receive the Precious Blood then provisions should be made to accommodate this situation.
5. Priests, Deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must wash their hands before Mass begins and before and after they distribute Holy Communion, using an antibacterial solution. This precaution also extends to those who minister to the sick who are homebound.

Once this emergency passes then the traditional way of sharing the Sign of Peace and the norm for distributing Holy Communion under both Species are to be reinstated.

I urge you to take these measures in order to foster the health and safety of the Faithful and the general public for as long as this swine influenza persists. I thank you for your immediate attention to this request.