Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Flu Season Concerns
Revised 1/17/20

Each winter, questions arise about adjusting liturgical practices during flu season. We will follow any directives of the USCCB and local/federal health authorities. We will keep parishes, schools, and agencies apprised of any changes or recommendations as they are made available to us. The USCCB Committee for Divine Worship has a general statement about liturgical practice and influenza. It can be downloaded at: http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacred-art-and-music/influenza-and-the-liturgy.cfm

The Office for Divine Worship and Sacraments and Chancery make the following recommendations with regard to liturgical practice:

- Encourage adults and children via websites, bulletin and possibly verbal announcements to take precautions such as frequent hand washing; remain home if they are sick; refrain from drinking from the chalice and from shaking hands at the Sign of Peace if they are not feeling well.
- Remind Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to wash their hands before and after Mass. The use of a disinfectant may be beneficial. However, please do not create a new “rite” of purifying hands before Communion. Please be discrete about the process of using the disinfectant.
- Liturgical changes should not be made, such as withdrawing the Precious Blood or omitting the Sign of Peace, unless Archbishop Schnurr first grants permission. This permission would only be granted in serious cases.

Following are some reasons for not withdrawing the Precious Blood at this time:

- People with Celiac Disease or wheat/gluten sensitivities often communicate by drinking the Precious Blood only. Withdrawing the chalice would leave them with no option for Holy Communion.
- No one is required to drink from the chalice. Therefore, adults can make their own decision. Those who don’t want to drink from the chalice do not have to, but those who choose to drink from the chalice still have the option.

Please contact the ODWS or the Chancery if you have any questions.