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## MEMORANDUM

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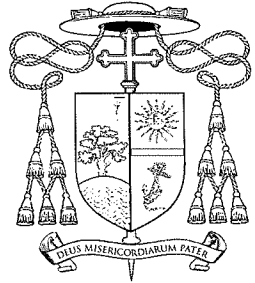
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**TO:** ALL PRIESTS AND PARISHES  
OF THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

**FROM:** BISHOP MICHAEL C. BARBER, SJ + MB8J.

**SUBJECT:** LITURGY DURING THIS COLD AND FLU SEASON UPDATE #1

**DATE:** MARCH 5, 2020



Since sending out our Diocesan Guidelines last week, some further questions have been raised by priests and the faithful concerning reception of Holy Communion and about health in general in this flu and cold season.

To reiterate:

- Pastors may choose not to distribute the Precious Blood.
- Pastors should help the faithful understand that the Sign of Peace doesn't require shaking hands or touching in any way—a nod, bow, or smile suffices. There is no reason to suspend the Sign of Peace.
- Pastors may choose to empty the holy water from the fonts at the doors of the church. People may still make the sign of the cross, without holy water. The faithful might be encouraged to carry their own holy water vials.

*Pastors may encourage the faithful to receive Holy Communion in the hand, but they may NOT forbid reception of Communion on the tongue.*

It is the law of the Church that the faithful may choose how they wish to receive Communion, not the priest or extraordinary minister. The option to receive Holy Communion on the tongue is still permitted. [Cf: *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 92. "Each of the faithful always has the right to receive Holy Communion on the tongue at his choice."]

Physicians have advised that there is no difference in the risk of virus transmission whether Holy Communion is received on the hand or the tongue. In either case, the priest or extraordinary minister should not touch the communicant's hand or tongue.

This is a good opportunity to catechize the faithful on the proper way to receive Holy Communion on the tongue. It is also opportune to educate your extraordinary ministers on how to properly distribute Communion on the tongue.

One idea: The priest can recommend that people who want to receive Communion on the tongue, go in the priest's line and receive from him, since he will most likely have more experience doing so.