

Bishop Malesic sends flu season recommendations to priests, deacons in Diocese of Greensburg

GREENSBURG — Bishop Edward C. Malesic is encouraging parish leaders in the Diocese of Greensburg to promote “prudent and beneficial” practices in parishes during the flu season.

In a letter emailed to priests and permanent deacons Jan. 31, Bishop Malesic asked for prayers for people suffering from illness and made several recommendations concerning liturgical practices at Mass.

He asked priests to evaluate the situations in their parishes and modify certain liturgical practices if necessary. He recommended the following:

- Inform people at Mass to exchange the sign of peace without physical contact, or eliminate the practice for now.
- Suspend the distribution of Communion from the chalice, while making sure other accommodations are made for parishioners who have medical conditions, such as gluten sensitivity, that require them to receive Communion from the chalice only.
- If still using the chalice, remind parishioners not to receive from the chalice if they are ill or fear they are becoming ill.
- Remind all people who distribute Communion to continue practicing good hygiene, including washing or sanitizing their hands.
- Remind ushers, greeters and other ministers of hospitality to hold doors open for parishioners entering and departing the church to minimize the spread of viruses on public surface areas.

Bishop Malesic said that as the flu season continues, he and other diocesan officials will continue to evaluate whether further actions regarding liturgical practices are warranted.