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## **Diocese issues guidelines for preventing spread of H1N1 Influenza**

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On Sept. 30, the Catholic Diocese of Fargo issued liturgical guidelines for clergy and parishioners encouraging voluntary actions that should assist in preventing the spread of H1N1 Influenza.

In the Catholic Church, parishioners may receive Holy Communion under the form of consecrated bread, known as the Precious Body of Christ, and consecrated wine, known as the Precious Blood of Christ, at every Mass. The Precious Blood is offered through a communal cup. The guidelines encourage those who feel ill to receive communion only under the form of bread. For Catholic schools within the diocese, “the Precious Blood is not to be distributed,” the guidelines state.

Shaking hands during Mass is also discouraged. “During Mass, at the Sign of Peace, you may choose to simply say ‘Peace be with you,’ without offering your hand,” the guidelines state.

Also addressed is the process for washing the vessels used during communion and encouragement to not attend Mass if people are ill. “Missing Mass due to illness is not sinful; it is prudent and shows a respect for your brothers and sisters. Stay at home, watch Mass on television or the Internet, read the Scripture readings for Sunday, pray devotional prayers such as the rosary or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, make a spiritual Communion,” the guidelines suggest.

The Diocese of Fargo provides TV Mass on WDAY-TV Channel 6, Fargo, and WDAZ-TV Channel 8, Grand Forks, at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays. Real Presence Radio, which operates Catholic radio stations serving the dioceses of Fargo, Crookston and the outlying areas, airs the Mass at 7 and 11 a.m. on Sundays and 11 a.m. on weekdays on AM1280 KVXR and AM1370 KWTL.

The Diocese of Fargo has more than 130 parishes in 30 counties in eastern North Dakota and has a Catholic population of more than 87,000 people.

The full guidelines can be found here: <http://www.fargodiocese.org/temp/H1N1Guidelines.pdf>.