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NEWS RELEASE

**Directives Regarding Liturgical Practices
During the 2018 Flu Season**

ALBUQUERQUE – Tuesday, January 16, 2018–IMMEDIATE RELEASE— This year, influenza (flu) is widespread in 46 states in the U.S. New Mexico is one of the states listed by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as having widespread flu outbreaks. The archdiocese prays for those who are sick, and we pray for those whose deaths are attributed to the flu. In a recent report, the CDC mentioned this is the first year the entire continental U.S. is at the same level of flu activity at the same time. This year there has been a 5.8% increase in laboratory-confirmed cases over last year.

Due to the severity of the flu season, the archdiocese will be taking the following steps in regards to the celebration of Mass:

- During the Sign of Peace, instead of shaking hands or hugging, as is practiced in some parishes, it would be best to simply nod your head and avoid bodily contact.
- When praying the Our Father, please do not hold hands. Simply extend your hands toward Heaven or fold your hands.
- Holy Communion will not be received under both species, just the Consecrated Host and not the Chalice.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands just prior to distribution Holy Communion and should wash them immediately after distribution. If it is easier, an anti-bacterial gel can be used.
- If you are sick, sneezing or coughing, it would be best for you to stay home. You are welcome to take advantage of the Sunday TV Masses which are available in English and Spanish. It is not a sin to miss Mass on Sundays if you are ill.

Please pray for all who have lost their lives as a result of the flu and may we do our part to prevent its spread.

These directives will be revoked when the situation improves.

For more information, please contact Very Rev. John C. Daniel, V.G., Vicar for Clergy, Moderator of the Curia at 505.831.8158--END