

# Diocese of Savannah

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP



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November 3, 2009

Reverend and dear Father,

Due to the oncoming flu season and the increasing spread of the H1N1 flu (swine flu), I wish to call your attention to the directives made available at the Clergy Retreat in September. Beginning Sunday, November 15, 2009, please implement the following directives: omit the sign of peace (the shaking of hands) and discontinue the distribution of the Precious Blood.

Some parishes have the practice of holding hands during the Lord's Prayer. It may be advisable to discontinue this practice. Enclosed is the complete listing of the recommendations.

These directives go into effect on Sunday, November 15, 2009. They will be in force until further notice from my office.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Kevin Boland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Most Reverend J. Kevin Boland  
Bishop of Savannah

JKB/ga

Enclosure

**Diocese of Savannah  
Office of the Bishop**

**Guidelines for Parishes to Help Alleviate the Spread of the H1N1 Virus**

1. Remind the parishioners that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not hold if they have the symptoms of the flu. The more charitable thing to do would be to stay at home.
2. Distribution of Communion from the cup would be discontinued. Only the celebrant would receive from the chalice.
3. Request everyone to receive Communion in the hand. The priest and/or minister should drop the host on the hand and avoid, if possible, touching the hand.
4. Those who insist on receiving on the tongue should be requested to go to the end of the line. Communion on the tongue can be difficult for the minister in attempting to avoid contact with saliva.
5. The handshake of peace would be discontinued. The best way to implement this is not to offer "the sign of peace" which is an optional part of the ritual.
6. Priests, Deacons and Communion Ministers should wash their hands with alcohol-based sanitizer both before and after the distribution of Communion.

Allegedly the H1N1 virus remains alive up to eight hours on surfaces. One church implemented the practice of having the parishioners wipe down the leaning edges of the pews as they left Mass in preparation for the next group of parishioners. This is certainly an optional procedure.