



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Tony DeGol

Director of Communications

2713 W Chestnut Avenue

Altoona, PA 16601

Phone: 814-695-5579

Cell: 814-937-1418

www.dioceseaj.org

proclaim.dioceseaj.org

January 6, 2020

MEDIA ADVISORY

Bishop Suspends Precious Blood During Flu Season

(ALTOONA, PA) – The Most Rev. Bishop Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, has directed that the Precious Blood not be distributed in any form at Mass beginning the weekend of January 11 and 12, 2020, and continuing until further notice. The directive is due to the severity of the flu season.

It is the belief of the Catholic Church that the whole Body of Christ is present under either form of consecrated bread and wine. Reception of Holy Communion on the hand is encouraged during this flu season; however, reception on the tongue may not be denied.

During this time, the faithful are also asked to avoid bodily contact during the Sign of Peace. A genuine nod of the head with eye contact with others will be the temporary practice.

These norms will remain in effect throughout the winter months or until the flu season ends. The diocese will announce when parishes may return to the regular practice for the distribution and reception of Holy Communion and the exchange during the Sign of Peace.