



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Tony DeGol

Secretary for Communications

925 S. Logan Boulevard

Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Telephone: (814) 695-5579

Facsimile: (814) 696-9516

Cell: (814) 937-1418

E-mail: tdegol@dioceseaj.org

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Bishop Bartchak Issues Flu Season Directives

(HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA) – The Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, has directed parishes in the Diocese to not distribute the Precious Blood in any form effective January 13-14, however parishes may begin the directive as early as this weekend. It is the belief of the Catholic Church that the whole Body of Christ is present under either form of consecrated bread and wine.

The Bishop has also directed that the faithful should avoid bodily contact, such as shaking hands, during the Sign of Peace. A genuine nod of the head with eye contact with others at Mass will be the temporary practice.

Bishop Bartchak's directives are the result of an advisory from public health officials that cases of the flu and similar contagious viruses remain a serious health concern at this time.

During this flu season, reception of Holy Communion on the hand is encouraged; however, reception on the tongue may not be denied.

The Bishop's directives will be followed throughout the winter months or until the flu season ends. The Diocese will announce when parishes may return to their regular practices.