

Dear Pastors, PLAs, Principals, DREs, and Youth Ministers:

By now, you have received notice that our flu policy has been updated and our website redesigned (<http://www.davenportdiocese.org/disaster/flu.htm>). I hope that you have found the information there helpful as you prepare your parishes and schools for the flu season.

At this point, it is important to keep in mind that, although H1N1 is causing a pandemic (that is, it has spread around the world), it is not causing severe disease in most people. Unfortunately, reporting in the media has tended to “hype” the outbreak and—as a result—created unnecessary worry. So, while we do need to remain alert and prepare for H1N1’s impact on our parishes, and we do need to keep in mind that flu can be a serious illness for some, we most definitely do not need to panic. Common sense interventions (Step 1 in our protocol) are all that are required at this point. Of course, one of the most important things that we can do to stop the spread of flu is simply to stay home if we are ill.

Among the major changes to our updated policy is a greater sensitivity to local conditions. That’s where we could really use your help. While we are able to monitor the spread of flu by the state’s public health regions (the diocese is split across three different regions), you will know before we will how your local community is being impacted. It may very well be that the way the flu is experienced in one community, county, or deanery will vary drastically in the way that it is experienced in another. Therefore, it may be necessary for select locations to enact Step 2 interventions while other areas of or institutions in the diocese remain at Step 1.

Therefore, please e-mail or call us with any significant changes in the flu situation in your area. For example: Are you noticing a significant increase in absenteeism from Mass or from school and religious education programs, or from work? Do parishioners in the health care field report increasing activity in their offices or hospital? When you visit the sick, are you noticing many more people with the flu? Together, we can help decide if and when—and where—we need to become more aggressive.

If Pastors and PLAs would direct their updates to Frank Agnoli and faith formation personnel their updated to Mary Wieser, that would be very much appreciated.

Thanks,

Deacon Frank Agnoli
Director of Liturgy
and Deacon Formation

Deacon David Montgomery
Director of Communication

Mrs. Mary Wieser
Director of Faith Formation
and Superintendent of Schools