



Office of Worship
Diocese of Honolulu

Memorandum

TO: All Clergy, Parishes and Schools

FROM: Deacon Modesto Cordero, Director
Office of Worship

DATE: October 27, 2017

RE: Mumps Outbreak in Hawaii

Due to the current rising of the mumps outbreak in Hawaii local pastoral discretion and care should be practiced as necessary. It is *advisable* by the Office of Worship that parishes may decide to temporarily suspend the distribution of communion through the use of the communal chalice (Precious Blood) at Mass.

The recommendation is to stop the use of the chalice(s) for at least the next three weeks (incubation period for mumps) or until the outbreak settles down. Parishes in areas where a high volume of tourists attend Mass should be alerted and highly consider this temporary suspension. As Church leaders we have to be sensitive to the needs and health of our congregations.

The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) continues to investigate an increasing number of cases of mumps infection statewide. As of October 26, 2017 the number of confirmed cases of mumps for 2017 is 512; 420 alone were reported on Honolulu.

Medical experts says that the "the highest risk population are those born after 1957. A patient with mumps is most contagious 3 to 7 days before he or she gets sick. This is a bad disease in adults. This is a highly virulent RNA virus that is passed on via oral secretions and it is not killed with a short pass through wine level alcohol."

It is recommended that patients suspected or diagnosed with mumps should self-isolate and avoid going out and exposing others for 9 days after onset of *parotitis* (swelling of the salivary glands). People who have been exposed to mumps and are not vaccinated should not attend public events or be in public areas from day 12 through day 25 after exposure.

This type of situations like annual cold and flu season (or any contagious diseases) always offers us the opportunity to teach the faithful about the use of common sense in sharing the sign of peace and the chalice. For example, a smile or a bow, or simply the

words “***Peace be with you***” might seem more appropriate during the exchange of peace. It is important to remind the faithful that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not apply to those who are ill, especially those who suffer from a contagious disease. It is a sign of consideration for themselves and others that those that are feeling ill should remain at home.

Within our churches, we must also use common sense and maintain good habits:

- Check and fill hand-soap dispensers in all of the restrooms of the church. You might also place a large dispenser of hand sanitizer in your church vestibule.
- Maintain clean, fresh holy water and holy water fonts.
- Sanitize with disinfectant wipes places and things in the church that are touched frequently.

Please feel free to contact me at the Office of Worship, 808-585-3342 or email at mcordero@rcchawaii.org should you have any questions.

Blessings!