

Santa Fe archbishop issues safety directive for flu season

January 9 2020

The head of New Mexico's largest Catholic diocese has issued directives aimed at protecting parishioners during flu season.

Santa Fe Archbishop John Wester cited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, saying New Mexico is one of the states experiencing widespread flu outbreaks.

He's urging people not to shake hands or hug when they attend Mass. Parishioners also are being asked not to hold hands while reciting the Our Father and those who are ill should stay home to avoid spreading the virus.

Priests and other church officials also are being asked to wash their hands before and after distributing communion.

Wester said the directives will be revoked when the situation improves. He said the archdiocese was instituting the directives not to limit expression of faith, but rather as a [preventive measure](#) against a widespread and potentially [deadly disease](#).

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