



### Diocesan Events

- 1) **Priests' Retreat** - May 18-22, 2009 - San Damiano Retreat House - Registration forms must be returned to the Office of Pastoral Leadership Development by **May 4, 2009**.

As a reminder, arrival time is 4:00 PM on Monday the 18<sup>th</sup>.

- 2) The **Annual Saint Pius X Catechetical Awards Banquet** will take place at the Father Meyer Center at Saint Michael's on Monday, June 1, 2009. The Most Reverend Stephen E. Blaire will present the Catechetical Awards. All paperwork, payment, and forms with awardees' names under each category must be sent to the Office of Religious Education no later than **May 11, 2009**.
- 3) **The World Day of Prayer for Vocations** will be observed on Sunday, May 3, 2009, Good Shepherd Sunday. Please include an intercession for faithful vocations in married life, single life, priesthood and consecrated life.
- 4) An **Effective Practices for Dynamic Youth Ministry Workshop** will be held on Friday, May 29, 2009 from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM at the Church of the Presentation in Stockton. Lunch will be provided. This workshop is designed for pastors, coordinators of youth ministry, directors of religious education, volunteer teams, and parish staff. We will explore the qualities and dimensions of parishes with effective youth ministry and highlight areas of growth.

The cost is \$45.00 for the first team member and \$25.00 for additional team members. For more information contact Ann Marie in the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at 466.0636 ext. 633 or [aavansino@stocktondiocese.org](mailto:aavansino@stocktondiocese.org).

### Informational Item

"In the past 72 hours, the United States government has declared a health emergency as a result of the Swine Influenza virus circulating in the US and Mexico." (Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc.)

I am asking all our parishes to take the following precautions to help mitigate its effects.

- The faithful should be encouraged to not hold hands during the reciting of the Our Father.
- The faithful should be encouraged to share the Sign of Peace without touching hands or kissing. This can be done with meaningful eye contact, smiles, and a bow of the head in reverence to one another.
- The faithful should be encouraged to receive Communion in their hands, and not on their tongue.

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- The cup is not to be shared with the faithful during Mass. Communion is only to be given in the species of the consecrated bread. However, if you have individuals in your parish who have Celiac disease and can only receive Communion from the cup, then they should be allowed to make the choice as to whether or not they are comfortable receiving from the cup at this time, and if they are, a simple means of allowing them to receive from the cup should be planned.
- Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be especially reminded of the need to practice good hygiene. Ministers of Holy Communion must be encouraged to wash their hands before Mass begins, or even to use an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution before and after distributing Holy Communion.

Once the emergency nature of this scare has passed, we will quickly re-institute our traditional means of sharing the sign of peace and norm of distributing communion from the cup at each Sunday celebration of the Eucharist within the Diocese of Stockton.

In addition to the decrees above, I would like to make the following suggestions regarding pastorally implementing these temporary changes within the parishes:

- Your pastoral judgment and pastoral approach are critical to ensuring that these temporary changes are seen as being in the best interest of the faithful, as well as ensuring that no one with special circumstances is excluded from the table.
- Remind parishioners that they should not come to church when they are not feeling well.
- Presiders and deacons should carefully wash their hands before and after Mass, and use an alcohol based hand sanitizer before distributing Communion.
- Hospitality Ministers (Greeters and Ushers) should be encouraged to carefully wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer before and after their ministries of greeting others, taking up the collection, and passing out bulletins at the end of Mass.
- An announcement about the requested changes should be made before Mass begins.
- If people are invited to greet one another, it should be after the announcement that they are being asked to not shake hands.
- Because not everyone is present at the beginning of Mass, it will be important to include a comment about these temporary changes during the homily and/or after the Great Amen and before the reciting of the Our Father.
- If a non-communicant comes forward for a blessing, the blessing should be given without touching them.
- This is an important time to pay attention to the members of your community who are handicapped and who need to receive on the tongue, or who need assistance in receiving. They should not feel turned away from Communion at this or any other time. Having an experienced minister go to them at the end of Communion and serve them will ensure they are not excluded, and that the minister is then able to immediately go and wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.

Please send feedback to Ray Desagun: [rdesagun@stocktondiocese.org](mailto:rdesagun@stocktondiocese.org)