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**Ongoing Communication regarding the H1N1 Flu Virus**

To all clergy and employees of the Archdiocese of Toronto,

I would like to provide a further update regarding our H1N1 planning. In my communication of November 2, I outlined a series of temporary measures that were implemented after consultation with local health experts, church officials, and others with extensive experience in pandemic planning.

In recent days, we have seen the number of cases of H1N1 decrease significantly. While we are relieved that the virus appears to have peaked, we must remain vigilant in maintaining good hygiene practices, especially during the winter months and traditional flu season. Over the last several weeks, all Ontarians have been provided the opportunity to receive vaccination against the H1N1 virus, in addition to the traditional flu shot offered at this time of year.

I would encourage parishes to continue the following pro-active measures:

- Provide hand cleaning stations near church entrances.
- Ask all those distributing communion to wash their hands before mass. You may wish to provide an alcohol-based sanitizer so that all ministers may sanitize their hands before and after distributing communion.
- Kindly remind your parishioners that if they are feeling sick or ill, it is best for them to stay home.

In terms of our liturgical practices, effective Wednesday, December 16, I am removing the temporary restrictions that I imposed in the communication of November 2.

Although it was not mentioned in that communication, I encourage parishes to provide the faithful with Holy Water in the fonts at the entrances to the church.

As in the past and to ensure consistency in our churches, please communicate these changes to your parishioners. This update will also be available on our website and through our H1N1 page:

[www.archtoronto.org/flu](http://www.archtoronto.org/flu).

To our family of faith, I extend my gratitude for your patience over the last number of weeks. As we await the birth of the Christ child, we are ever mindful of our call to serve the most vulnerable among us just as Christ cares for each member of his family.

Sincerely in Christ,

*+ Thomas Collins*

Thomas Collins  
Archbishop of Toronto