

Pandemic Update #2
May 8, 2009

The number of flu cases continues to rise and we are now seeing folks coming down with flu who did not travel to Mexico and did not directly interact with someone who had been there. Fortunately almost all of those affected have not required hospitalization and their illness has been relatively mild. We need to remember that typically there will be a second wave in six months or so. Although that gives our scientists time to develop better treatments and a vaccine, it also gives the virus time to potentially mutate.

Increasingly there is media debate suggesting that there has been an overreaction to a relatively minor influenza event. After all, the thousands of cases feared by pandemic event planners simply have not materialized. Others suggest that being prepared and diligent is simply being wise. That concern for the well being of society suggests adherence and due diligence to the warning signs and potential implications of a pandemic event.

It may very well be that a “full pandemic event” does not materialize. If this turns out to be the case then we can be genuinely thankful.

Meanwhile, it is important for the Diocese to reinforce the understanding that;

- Pandemic events are not based upon the number of confirmed cases but on the science and geography of the development and spread of new influenza viruses.
- That due diligence is also good stewardship.
- That there are individuals and families who are directly and indirectly impacted by the H1N1 flu and we need to be aware and responsive to their pastoral needs if and when we encounter them.
- That a vital part of mitigating the spread of any influenza virus is adhering to the protocols highlighted in our Emergency/ Pandemic Response Plan and directives issued through our offices of public health.
- That now is not the time for complacency. In fact, until indicated by the WHO, continued vigilance must be our “new norm”.

Elsewhere on this site you will find an Ontario Public Health Information Update regarding the H1N1 flu virus.

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