

## "COMMON SENSE DURING THE COLD AND FLU SEASON"

Parishioners have asked about exchanging the "*Sign of Peace*" during flu season. Apparently some churches have made changes in the liturgy for the flu season. Perhaps a few others are thinking about the same issue. The answer is "**common sense.**" In the Universal Church there are no official liturgical changes necessary at this time. Such things as Holy Water, the Eucharistic Cup, receiving communion on the tongue and shaking hands are all options. So there is no need to suspend their use. People should use "**common sense.**" However, you may want to consider these things.

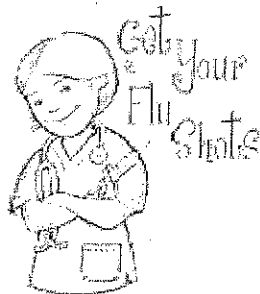
The "*Sign of Peace*" is not about saying hello to the person next to you. Hopefully this has already taken place before the celebration begins. The "*Sign of Peace*" is about being properly disposed to receive the Holy Eucharist. It's about being reconciled with God and the Church. The gesture to be used is not explicit. The rubrics (*rules or guides*) say "*All make an appropriate sign of peace, according to local custom.*" The more traditional custom is to place both hands on the shoulders of the one next to you and say, "*The peace of the Lord be with you always.*" To which the person responds, "*And with your spirit.*" This is often seen at Masses celebrated by the pope. In the United States we seem to be more comfortable with shaking hands, although we may choose other ways to do this. In other words a suitable sign or expression of peace should be manifested among all those present.

Should we touch hands, drink from the cup, or receive on the tongue? The answer is "**common sense.**" If you have the flu or a serious cold the medical guidelines are that you should stay away from public places such as the mall, concerts, work, school and, yes, even church. Realistically if someone is sitting next to you with the flu or a cold the air born germs have landed on your way before the sign of peace takes place. However if someone doesn't shake your hand don't be offended. The words themselves with a slight bow or some other gesture suffices.

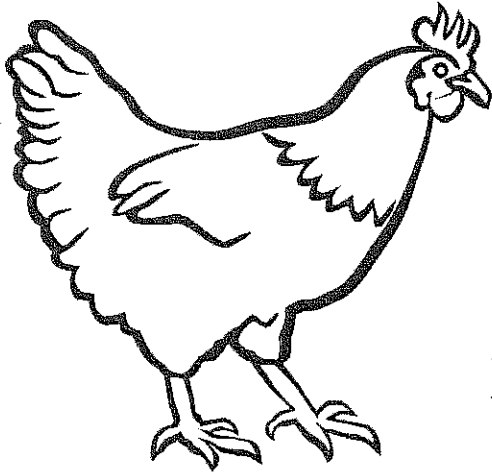
Continue to wash your hands with hot water and soap. Use hand sanitizers. All of these things are available in the four church restrooms, in each sacristy, and in the church kitchen. Resist all temptations to touch your face unless you want to wash, eat or slap yourself. Gargle twice a day with warm salt water. Drink lots of warm liquids and eat a balanced diet. One more suggestion. Please don't leave your used tissues or other debris in the pews for the priests or ushers to pick up between masses. There are germs here as well.

Your presence in church is always wanted, but please use "**common sense**" during this flu season. Stay holy, happy and healthy during the season.

Father Pedzich



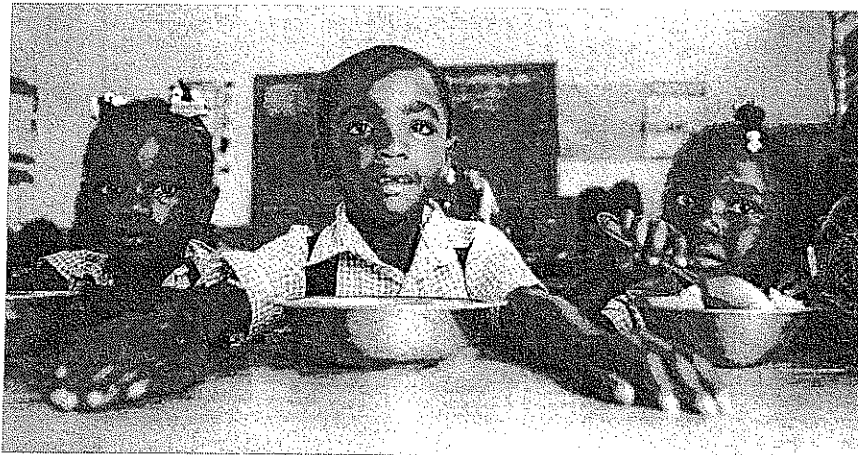
# Chicken & Biscuit Dinner Haiti Benefit



Saturday March 3  
from 4-7pm  
in the Church Hall

Buffet Style - Takeout available  
\$10 adult, \$5 child under 10

All proceeds support the school lunch program for the five schools in our twin parish, Church of the Immaculate Conception, in Chauffard, Haiti. Every \$5 buys 10 months of school lunch for one student.



*Please help* by providing 2 liter bottles of drinks and desserts.  
These may be dropped off in the church kitchen Saturday,  
or the Rectory porch earlier.

## 100 Weddings in Chauffard

For months, Father Raymond has been meeting with 100 couples from Chauffard and the neighboring villages who would like to be married in the church. In this Year of the Family, we would like to help him celebrate marriage and the family. Father Raymond says these are very poor people, "lacking in everything." He would like to provide nice clothes to some of the people and organize a reception to follow the ceremony. "The occasion will also offer to all the people the opportunity to retake their first communion. The community has a good welcome to the idea and this will be a beautiful party on the earth and in heaven." We are accepting donations to help pay for the wedding reception and outfits.

## Collection for Sea Container Shipment

For the months of February and March, we are collecting items to send in the April sea container shipment. Here in Syracuse, we pack boxes of needed items and mail them to Tennessee where the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas loads all the boxes into the shipping containers for the voyage to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The Parish Twinning Program representatives will meet the sea containers at the docks in Port-au-Prince and take care of the lengthy process for the boxes to clear Customs. Once that is taken care of, Father Raymond will be notified to pick up our boxes of donations at the Parish Twinning Program offices in Port-au-Prince. We are looking for donations of vitamins, pain relievers, hydrocortisone, reading glasses, Tums, antibacterial cream, bar soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, pencils, pens, and pencil sharpeners. There are no stores in the six-village Chauffard community. The items are greatly needed and will be distributed in the schools and at the clinic.



*You can drop off donations for the sea container shipment at the Church entrances any weekend. We are especially looking for donations of vitamins, pain relievers, hydrocortisone, reading glasses, Tums, antibacterial cream, bar soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, pencils, pens, and pencil sharpeners.*