

'Flu update – 23rd July 2009



The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have today recommended that the use of the Chalice is suspended during this phase of the Swine 'Flu pandemic. Read their letter [here](#).

The preferred alternative to the Chalice is to take Holy Communion in one kind only, without wine. Clergy should emphasize that while communion in both kinds is the norm in the Church of England, in faithfulness to Christ's institution, when it is received only in one kind the fullness of the Sacrament is received none the less.

Those who still wish to offer bread and wine should do so **only** by means of "personal intinction by presiding minister," allowing the priest to dip communion wafers in the chalice before handing them out to communicants. The presiding minister's hands should previously have been washed with an alcohol-based rub before handling the elements and the vessels.

Individual cups are not permitted and do not resolve the hygiene issues in the present pandemic where infection is transmitted via droplet.

Intinction by communicants is not recommended. It runs the risk that droplets, the means of transmission of Swine 'Flu, on the ends of fingers could come into contact with the wine. Likewise, any practice where a common cup containing bread or wafers is passed between communicants runs the same risk. This practice should not be followed.

Read detailed advice from the Bishop of Ripon and Leeds to dioceses [here](#), including advice on [administering communion](#) and a summary of [Government advice](#).

General Hygiene –Observe Best Practice. The impact of the Swine Flu virus can be reduced through following the Government's 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' campaign and their other advice [here](#).

Clergy and those administering Holy Communion may wish to adopt the practice of taking time to wash hands thoroughly before a service, maybe through making the lavabo a more than symbolic hand-washing.

Other worthwhile precautions include ensuring that surfaces such as handrails, door knobs etc, commonly touched by many hands, are cleaned frequently. Holy Water Stoups should also be suspended. There is no recommendation about The Peace, but some parishioners might prefer a verbal exchange to a handshake.

If you catch flu, the Government's newly set up National Pandemic Flu Service is the first port of call. It operates telephone help lines to diagnose cases of Swine Flu and issue anti-viral drugs if necessary. Clergy who have been diagnosed with Swine Flu either by a physician or the National Pandemic Flu Service are encouraged to stay indoors until they are well. Please bear in mind that alternative backup arrangements may be needed. In all other circumstances, clergy should maintain normal activity as far as possible.

As the situation develops it is being watched closely and there is a comprehensive plan in place should it deteriorate or should Government advice ask for this to be deployed.

+Alan St Albans