

# *Ad Clerum 3c.2*

## INFECTIOUS ILLNESS AND THE CHALICE

February 2020. Please note carefully the adjusted advice in 4., below, which no longer recommends intinction.

Where an individual communicant is so seriously anxious about the risk of infection as to want to avoid attendance at Holy Communion, we recommend that he/she should be encouraged to receive Communion in one kind - the bread only - and then leave the communion rail before receiving the cup. In all cases fears can be allayed if the person who is administering the chalice is careful to wipe the rim with a purificator or paper tissue, though we accept this is not a guaranteed way to avoid cross-infection.

The administration of Holy Communion has, for centuries, been considered hygienic and is of course a means of grace and healing. It is wise to follow best practice more recently laid down at times of winter flu and with the concerns surrounding Coronavirus and other emergent infections.

1. *Wash Hands.* Priests presiding at the Eucharist, communion administrators and servers are reminded to wash hands. We strongly advise the use of hand sanitizers immediately before the Preparation of the Table and Eucharistic prayer.
2. *Chalices.* Use silver/silver gilt chalices only and rotate the chalice and purificator between administrations.
3. *Communion wine.* Use only **fortified** wine. As a precaution, the provision of non-alcoholic Communion wine should cease and communicants wishing to receive this should receive in one kind only. The only exception to this is that non-alcoholic wine may be used where it is the practice to provide it in individual cups.
4. *Do not intinct.* Because hands can be as much a source of pathogens as lips, intinction is no safer than drinking and can introduce germs into the cup. Intinction (dipping the bread into the wine) can also threaten those with certain immune or allergic conditions. For instance, those with gluten intolerance for whom traces of gluten can be hazardous are at greater risk when other communicants have dipped their communion wafer into the wine.
5. *Consider receiving Holy Communion in one Kind.* It is Anglican teaching that to receive the sacrament in one kind only (i.e., just the bread) is to receive the sacrament in its entirety. The celebrant should always receive from the Chalice. Should a communicant feel ill or not wish to drink from the chalice then he or she ought to receive the consecrated bread alone. There is no need at this stage to cease offering the chalice to the congregation.
6. *The Peace.* At this time there is no need to refrain from shaking hands when sharing the Peace.
7. *Visiting.* Pastoral visitors to homes and hospitals should observe all precautions in personal hygiene before and after such visits.

The present medical evidence indicates there is no risk of infection from the AIDS virus through, for example, the common use of cups, glasses, towels, etc. The AIDS virus is very fragile and can only be transmitted into the blood stream. Surface contact is not sufficient to allow infection. There does not appear to be any known case where the virus has been transmitted by saliva. Wine by its alcoholic nature is antiseptic and the chalice is a poor medium for transmitting infection. There are no grounds for recommending any change in the traditional practice of sharing the common cup at Holy Communion.

[Reissued February 2020]