



23 July 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Last week I sent out advice concerning the current flu pandemic and the implications for worship. I continue to keep that advice under review. I regard it as important that those presiding at Holy Communion are fully apprised of up to date guidance as it is received.

Today the Archbishops of Canterbury and York sent out guidance to bishops which I have attached below. It is substantially the same as the advice which I offered last week. In particular, the guidance recommends the suspension of the administration of the chalice at Holy Communion during the wave of pandemic flu.

For those who still wish to offer both bread and wine the Archbishops recommend practice whereby the presiding minister (following strict hygiene procedures) personally intincts all wafers before giving them to the communicant. You may find it preferable to intinct and dry all wafers before consecration. Please note that neither the Archbishops nor myself recommend that communicants dip the wafer into the wine themselves because of the possibilities of cross infection.

I would be grateful if presiding clergy would read the letter below and the related links. Inevitably advice may need to change and adapt as circumstances change.

Thank you for all you are doing to offer appropriate pastoral care at this time.

With every good wish  
Yours ever in the Lord

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'David Bradford'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'B' at the end.

To: Diocesan Bishops

The Feast of St Mary Magdalene  
22nd July 2009

Dear Colleague,

It now seems right to offer guidance at a national level about how the Church of England's worship might best take into account the interests of public health during the current phase of the swine flu pandemic.

The Department of Health have recently advised us that “in a pandemic it makes good sense to take precautions to limit the spread of disease by not sharing common vessels for food and drink”. In the light of this advice, we recommend those presiding at Holy Communion suspend the administration of the chalice during this wave of pandemic flu<sup>1</sup>. For those who still wish to offer in both kinds, we recommend the practice whereby the presiding minister, whose hands should have been washed with the appropriate alcohol-based rub before handling the elements and the vessels, personally intincts all wafers before placing them in the hands of communicants. This is a practice widely observed in Anglican churches throughout Africa. Communicants receiving in this way need to be confident that the clergy and all assistant ministers follow the relevant guidance on hygiene.

The Bishop of Ripon & Leeds circulated substantial guidance, including a summary of the government’s advice<sup>2</sup>, with his letter of 23 June<sup>3</sup>. Many of you have already issued local guidance based upon its content. We regard it as important that those presiding at Holy Communion are aware of this advice<sup>4</sup> and of that contained in this letter. They should offer guidance to the congregation about appropriate precautions in receiving communion and exchanging the peace.

We shall keep this advice under review and will ensure that the detailed guidance provided on the Church of England website<sup>5</sup> is kept up-to-date. In the meantime, we wish to express our gratitude to you and those who share your ministry for the pastoral care and service offered at this time of national concern.

+Rowan Cantuar:

+Sentamu Ebor:

<sup>1</sup> The administration of Holy Communion in the Church of England is principally governed by section 8 of the Sacrament Act 1547, which provides that ‘... the... most blessed Sacrament be hereafter commonly delivered and ministered unto the people... under both the kinds, that is to say of bread and wine, except necessity otherwise require...’

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/swineflu/governmentadvice.doc>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/swineflu/letter23609.doc>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/swineflu/communion.doc>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/swineflu>

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