



23rd July 2009

Dear Colleagues

Swine 'flu pandemic – guidance for celebrants of Holy Communion

As you may have heard, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have offered 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.

Following recent advice from the Department of Health they recommend that celebrants suspend the administration of the chalice during this wave of pandemic 'flu.

The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds on behalf of the House of Bishops has already produced a paper about the theology and practise of administration of Holy Communion in the current situation. This can be viewed on the diocesan website (Administration > Downloads).

The previous guidance issued highlighted the use of alcohol gel for those administering communion and this advice still applies.

In case any are uncertain this advice means that the President at Holy Communion will still consecrate a chalice of wine, but this will be consumed only by the celebrant.

The Bishop of Ripon and Leeds' paper made clear that it was theologically acceptable for the congregation to receive in "one kind" only, and personally that is what I recommend as best practise.

However the Archbishops' do mention that if there is strong feeling that people should receive in two kinds, then the celebrant should intinct the wafer and then administer into the hands of the communicant. (As with previous advice the adminstrant should avoid contact with the hands of the recipient). I fear that in a large congregation particularly that this is likely to be a complicated process and it would be better to administer in one kind.

In addition to the Archbishops' advice you will have noted that infection is caused by both droplets and physical contact. In the light of this it is also acceptable for clergy to review the arrangements for the exchange of the peace which can be done verbally and without physical contact.

You will be kept informed as to any further precautions that might be necessary and when these particular ones can be relaxed.

Further information

The diocesan website will be updated on a regular basis as the situation changes. Further information can also be obtained from the following websites

www.direct.gov.uk www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk www.eoe.nhs.uk www.cofe.anglican.org

Diocesan contacts for resilience planning

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