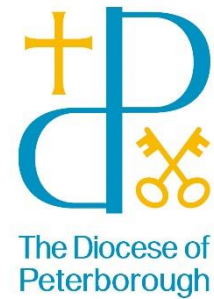


HYGIENE AT HOLY COMMUNION

From Bishop Donald

20 February 2020



Instructions for those presiding at or distributing Holy Communion

1. The ministers are to welcome people to communion, when necessary assuring them that appropriate hygiene precautions are in place, and helping them to understand the Bishop's guidance for worshippers.
2. An alcohol based hygiene gel or fluid must always be kept with the communion vessels, and in the travelling kit of those who minister in different churches. This must be used to wash the hands of everyone who will touch, break, or distribute the communion bread. This washing will follow any sharing of the peace, receiving of the collection, and lavabo ceremony.
3. The ministers must put the communion bread into the recipient's hand, not into the mouth.
4. The ministers must ensure that no intinction takes place, advising worshippers of the appropriate alternatives as necessary.
5. After the service, the communion vessels must be washed in hot water.

Guidance for worshippers at Holy Communion

1. The Church of England encourages worshippers to receive Holy Communion faithfully and regularly, as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ. We use a shared plate and a shared cup.
2. The Church takes hygiene very seriously. The chances of catching an infection by receiving Holy Communion are very low indeed, but this guidance is issued to reassure, and to reduce the risk even further.
3. Intinction, dipping the bread into the wine, is unhygienic, poses a risk to those who are gluten intolerant, and is not to be practised.
4. Similarly, the practice of receiving the communion bread directly onto the tongue or into the mouth is unhygienic. The minister will place the bread into the worshipper's hand.
5. It is good practice for worshippers to use their right hand to shake hands during the Peace, then the left hand to receive the communion bread and pass it to the mouth.
6. There is a small risk of catching an infection by hand to hand contact at the Peace. Any worshipper concerned by that is encouraged to carry a hygiene gel and use it after the Peace or before the Communion. For your reassurance, the ministers of communion bread will have used a hygiene gel before serving you.
7. Those who are worried about receiving infection from the communion cup, or who have a mouth or throat infection themselves, should simply refrain from taking the wine. Although we practice communion "in both kinds" (bread and wine), we receive all the benefits of Holy Communion even if we are only able to receive in one kind.

With warm greetings, and all good wishes, as we worship and share Christ together.

+ Donald