

Parish Policy on Receiving Holy Communion by Intinction

The Priests of the Diocese of Chicago have received an official e-mail from the Diocesan Center on several health matters including intinction (the sacred Host being dipped into the Chalice with the communicant then receiving the Body of Christ and the Precious Blood together). In part the second section says:

The recent outbreak of a new strain of influenza has understandably raised concerns about communicable diseases and the use of the common cup at the Eucharist. It is important to remember that transmission of infection usually requires more than a single exposure to a particular virus, and individual susceptibility to infection also affects whether or not exposure develops into illness. ...there is evidence that [intinction] actually increases the risk of infection. Hands, more than lips, are a primary source of transmission of viruses and bacteria. Receiving the consecrated Bread and dipping it into the Cup can transfer potential sources of infection from the hands of communicants into the consecrated Wine, spreading it to others.

In the past we at St Paul's have always publicly stated the official policy of the Bishops of Chicago since 1941 that intinction may not be used as a normal or regular way to receive Holy Communion in this diocese. On the other hand, we have never made an issue when a person has indicated a desire to receive Communion this way, on the assumption that, inasmuch as each communicant knows the diocesan policy, it is a case of "an individual need for a good reason on an individual occasion."

However, in the light of the updated diocesan communication without exception intinction **may not** be used to administer Holy Communion to any person at any time under any circumstances.

The historic Catholic Church has always taught the Eucharistic Doctrine of Concomitance, i.e. that the communicant receives the whole Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under either species. Anglicanism, rooted in the Early Christian Church, has for the past 500 years – like the Patristic Church – made available Holy Communion to the laity under both species, although only the Priest Celebrant of the Mass *must* receive the Chalice. However, for most of its 2,000-year history the Western Catholic Church (the Church on the continent of Europe) administered a fully valid Eucharist to the laity under one kind only.
