

St.Dominic's Community, South West Leicestershire

The re-introduction of Holy Communion from the chalice

Dear brothers and sisters,

As most of you will know by now our bishops have given permission for Communion to be given under both kinds, ie. from the host and from the chalice, starting from Maundy Thursday. This is something that has not taken place since the start of the Covid19 pandemic and as we are now slowly returning to some sort of normality in matters personal social and spiritual, it has become appropriate to take this step. Accordingly, after discussion with our Eucharistic Ministers and pastoral teams, it has been decided to offer the chalice at the Masses on Maundy Thursday and on weekdays after Easter Sunday, thereafter on Sundays also if and when this is appropriate. I realise that many of you have significant reservations about this, as indeed do some of our ministers, and this must be respected. Not everyone still feels confident about many things relating to their lives of faith since the pandemic and indeed not a few people have yet to return to the practice of that faith in weekly Mass. And so, no one will be obliged to receive Communion from the chalice nor made to feel bad about it. This is your choice and it may be some time before you feel ready to take this step. No minister will be asked to offer the chalice if they are uneasy about it. For many people, however, this initiative will be most welcome as you want to receive the fullness of the sign of Holy Communion once again. The logistics of how we are to proceed will no doubt become obvious as time goes on, so patience and reverence will be our watchwords. I hope this will be acceptable to everyone.

In addition, you will know that we no longer have any priests, nor are likely to, and that the burden of responsibility for you all has fallen very heavily on us. There are so few of us left and many of us are struggling with health issues because of it. I do not resent this at all – your care has always been of the utmost importance to me, but there are now rather a lot of people to look after! We must be prepared, therefore, for the eventuality that one morning your priest might not appear for Mass for whatever reason. Our ministers have been trained and will be able to lead a Eucharistic Service on a Sunday as well as the weekdays they have already been doing for years. This is preferable to shutting a church or not offering Holy Communion to people at all. Incidentally, as things stand, 80 people receive Holy Communion at home or in a residential facility each weekend from one of our ministers and more than half that from myself during the week. I want to thank our ministers most sincerely for their faithful and devoted service to Our Lord and to you in this matter. They will also be leading funerals from time to time, when the service is celebrated without Mass, and have been quietly doing this for quite a while as well.

We have to face these challenges with a generous spirit and try to move away from the ‘clerical’ model of management that sadly has caused so much difficulty in latter years and to which Pope Francis refers incessantly as one of the greatest sorrows of his pontificate. We do not have to wait for synods and discussions to answer a need which may occur without warning, but respond reverently and responsibly so that the work of Our Lord and the preaching of his gospel is continued and developed. Easter is upon us and on behalf of Frs.Brian and Michael Mason, I wish you all a blessed and holy feast.