

## **Administration of Holy Communion during a Flu Pandemic**

In view of the current concern about Swine Flu it is recommended that parishes implement infection control procedures for the distribution of Holy Communion in line with Government advice. The full advice can be found at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

### **The Consecrated Bread**

Government advice envisages that during a flu pandemic the distribution of the consecrated bread at Holy Communion will continue, but specifies that communion should not be given on the tongue. Care must be taken to ensure that the fingers of the person distributing the sacrament do not come into contact with the communicants hands. High standards of hand hygiene must be adopted, (soap and hot water and/or alcohol gels).

### **The Cup**

Government advice remains that in the event of pandemic flu affecting centres of population, administration of the common cup should be suspended (the priest alone receiving in both kinds) until the danger has passed.

Whilst communion in both kinds is the norm in the Church in Wales, when it is received in one kind the fullness of the sacrament is received none the less.

Some have suggested that intinction is an acceptable alternative to the common cup. Studies have suggested that intinction may in fact present a greater risk factor than the common cup. Fingers generally carry a higher level of contamination than lips, so consecrated bread handled by an infected person and then dipped into a common cup will carry a risk of contaminating the consecrated wine. Similarly fingers may dip into the consecrated wine. Where only celebrants or servers intinct the consecrated bread and then place it on a recipients tongue or hands, there is a risk of the servers fingers becoming contaminated if the recipient is carrying the virus. For these reasons communion in one kind (the consecrated bread) only is recommended.