



11 September 2009

Dear Colleagues

### **Swine Flu Advice and Guidance**

A number of clergy and churches have made contact to ask about the state of advice regarding the administration of the Holy Communion during the current Swine Flu Pandemic.

The advice from the Archbishops remains unchanged at the present time. However I know that in a number of dioceses the advice has been “relaxed”. This is against the background of falling rates of infection throughout this country.

Whilst I understood why the current advice was given nationally I am aware that it begs the question as to when the recommended restrictions on using the common cup should be lifted.

I have consulted with neighbouring dioceses, and although advice is varied, I consider it would be reasonable in the current circumstances to return to the use of the common cup.

I have very much appreciated the way that clergy and churches have wanted to act together over this matter, even though some have great reservation about the theological implications and the practical value of withdrawing the cup. The restriction is clearly a cause of severe irritation to some parishioners, though it is equally true that before the advice was issued there were people very concerned that it was not in place.

As I am sure you are aware, there is an expectation that infection rates will rise when the weather turns colder, and that there is a possibility of the virus becoming more virulent. If this proves to be the case then clergy will be informed and advised appropriately.

When the common cup is restored at services, it should be emphasised that people may still choose to receive in one kind only.

This has been an unprecedented situation, and is likely to be a topic of debate when the whole college of bishops meets next week.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nigel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the end of the word.