



BISHOP OF THE
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of the* RIO GRANDE

THE RIGHT REVEREND MICHAEL BUERKEL HUNN

April 29, 2022

Dear friends in the Diocese of the Rio Grande,

Due to the COVID pandemic, we, the Diocese of the Rio Grande, have forgone the practice of receiving the Sacrament from the common cup out of love for our neighbor and concern for the public health.

This was temporary situation, and it is now time for each congregation to begin planning to restore the practice of offering the common cup.

As we have done throughout COVID, each congregation's clergy and vestry or bishop's committee will work with me on a process that is right for each church. We will continue to balance public health concerns with the strength of our theology and centuries of Christian practice.

Here's the process:

Step One: Each cleric and vestry or bishop's committee will discuss their congregation's needs, practices, and traditions with respect to the Eucharist.

Step Two: The clergy will design and present some teaching about the Eucharist with particular emphasis on the common cup in the tradition of the Episcopal Church.

Step Three: each congregation will restore the administration of the Sacrament by means of the common cup on a timeline appropriate to each congregation.

See the attached for information about the common cup in the tradition of the Church and also about public safety and the process of intinction.

May the Blessing of God Almighty be upon us.

Faithfully,

+Michael

The Right Reverend Michael B. Hunn
Bishop
The Diocese of the Rio Grande



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On the Common Cup:

“The doctrine of concomitance dates back to the sixth century and takes its name from the Latin “accompany with.” Because Christ’s person is one, it holds, his Eucharistic presence cannot be divided, and so a communicant receives the complete benefit of the sacrament in either bread or wine. The 1555 Council of Trent’s Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, the Roman Catholic Church’s official summary of the matter, declares, “Moreover, that the Body itself is under the species of wine, and the Blood under the species of bread, and the soul under each by virtue of that natural connection and concomitance by which the parts of Christ our Lord... are naturally joined together.” (Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, 3).

During the High Middle Ages, approximately 1000 to 1300 A.D., it became common practice to deny the Eucharistic chalice to lay people, and the doctrine of concomitance was often used to justify the practice. Followers of the 14th-century reformer Jan Hus made the restoration of the cup a rallying cry of their movement. Calling themselves Utraquists (from *sub utraque specie*: under both species), they attacked concomitance for its role in justifying a process that subverted Christ’s practice at the Last Supper, where “he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.” (Mark 14:23). In a series of wars against the Holy Roman Empire that began in 1519, the Utraquists marched into battle beneath a flag that bore the image of the Eucharistic chalice.

The 16th-century Protestant reformers strongly supported the administration of Holy Communion in both bread and wine. Article XXX of the landmark Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, in its discussion of Eucharistic practice, states, “The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people: for both the parts of the Lord’s sacrament, by Christ’s ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.” Concomitance, because of its close association with Roman Catholic scholastic Eucharistic doctrine, also was often criticized by 17th-century Anglican theologians.

Even the 20th-century [Anglo-Catholic](#) dogmatician C. B. Moss argued firmly against administering communion in one kind in his 1943 classic *The Christian Faith*. “Communion in both kinds is a Divine command, which the church has no right to disobey,” Moss wrote, “except where communion in one kind only is the sole alternative to no communion at all. Any Anglican priest who refuses the cup to the laity, and any lay person who refuses to receive it (except for the most necessary reasons, and then only with the bishop’s permission), is committing a grave sin, and rendering himself liable to ecclesiastical censure.” (356)”

From an article in *The Living Church* found at <https://livingchurch.org/2020/03/09/bishops-withhold-common-cup-in-response-to-coronavirus/>



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On Intinction:

Many people think that intinction (The process of dipping the bread in the wine before receiving it), is a safer way to receive the sacrament in both kinds than drinking from the common cup, but the following article shows how this is not the case.

In the Diocese of the Rio Grande those congregations that wish to practice intinction are encouraged to do so in the following manner. We want to avoid having each communicant dip their wafer into the chalice and also to avoid having the person administering the sacrament put their fingers close to the mouth of the person receiving. The following method would be safer:

1. The person(s) administering the sacrament uses hand sanitizer as part of the lavabo.
2. Wafers and not leavened bread are used for intinction.
3. The person(s) administering the sacrament dip the wafer into the wine themselves and either drop the host into the outstretched hands of those receiving or hands the host to the communicant from pinched fingers to pinched fingers such that their fingers do not touch one another.
4. “The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ...etc” are spoken.

Details about communion and public health can be found here:

https://www.episcopalrelief.org/wp-content/uploads/old-uploaded/files/What-We-Do/Planning-for-Pandemics/transmission_of_disease_via_the_common_cup.pdf