

# Saint Philip's returns to the Common Cup on Christmas Eve.

## Why?

There are several reasons that Saint Philip's is returning to the Common Cup:

### Theologically:

Drinking from the Common Cup is the normative means of receiving the Blood of Christ during the Holy Eucharist. It signifies our union in the Body of Christ, and our participation in the same act to which Christ commanded his disciples:

*"Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins."*(BCP 363)

### Historically:

During the Middle Ages, fears about inadvertently spilling the Blood resulted in the laity receiving only the Host during Communion—or often not receiving either. Increasingly, clergy refused the Cup to the people as a standard matter of course. Restoring the Cup to the people was an important tenet of the Protestant Reformation, and is inscribed in our own 39 Articles of Religion (1571; 1801):

Article 30. Of both Kinds: *"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."*(BCP 874)

### Canonically:

The Canons and the Book of Common Prayer explicitly require the clergy to administer the Cup to the people. At the end of the Prayer of Consecration (in both Rite I and Rite II) we read,

*"The ministers receive the Sacrament in both kinds, and then immediately deliver it to the people. The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words..."*(BCP 338, 365)

In the "Additional Directions" to Holy Eucharist we read that,

*"Opportunity is always to be given to every communicant to receive the consecrated Bread and Wine separately."*(BCP 407)

## Why then has Saint Philip's only administered by intinction?

During the Pandemic, understandable fears about the transmission of infection resulted in exceptional changes to the administration of Communion, by canonical authority. In many places, the Eucharist was administered in only one Kind (the Host), and in many dioceses, administration of the Common Cup was temporarily banned. These measures were always intended to be temporary. Pastoral considerations have kept this practice in force at Saint Philip's, but we are now three to four years behind most parishes in returning to the Common Cup. Many parishioners have long desired to return to the Common Cup as a central part of their spiritual practice. We do so with the full support and encouragement of the Bishop and clergy.

## When did intinction start?

In Anglican Churches (and many other denominations) intinction is a relatively recent practice. Drinking from the Common Cup is the only means of receiving the Blood of Christ that is contemplated by our current Book of Common Prayer (and all previous prayerbooks), except in “Communion under Special Circumstances” and the “Ministration to the Sick.” Intinction appears to have become common practice only since the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s.

## Is there a risk of infection from the Common Cup?

**There is no statistically significant risk of infection from the Common Cup.** This issue has been the subject of many peer-reviewed scientific studies and ecclesiastic inquiries since the 1960s. The HIV/AIDS crisis (1980s-1990s), SARS outbreaks (2000s), and COVID-19 all precipitated studies, none of which have found increased risks of infection.<sup>1</sup> There have been no documented cases of disease outbreaks from the Common Cup. The higher alcohol content of the fortified wine (18% ABV), the naturally antimicrobial surfaces of sterling silver chalices, and the wiping of the chalice with a clean purificator all further diminish the risk. As one microbiologist has put it, “It isn’t any riskier than standing in line at the movies.”<sup>2</sup>

## Must I drink from the Common Cup?

**No.** While both the tradition of the Church and logic of the current Book of Common Prayer are clear that drinking from the Common Cup is the normative means of receiving the Blood of Christ (e.g., BCP 316, 335, 337, 338, 363, 407, 457, 574, 874, etc.), this is not a requirement in this parish or diocese.

## Can I receive by intinction?

**Yes, but the Host will be intincted for you by the Eucharistic Minister.** As the priest puts the Host on the palm you may either eat it and then drink from the Cup, or hold it, in which case the Eucharistic Minister will intinct it for you. This is much cleaner than having many hands go in the Cup.

## Can I receive only the Host?

**Yes.** The tradition of the Church is clear that the Sacrament is fully received in one Kind.

## Can I still receive a gluten-free Host?

**Yes.**

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<sup>1</sup> “Within the CDC, the consensus of the National Center for Infectious Diseases [...] is that a theoretic risk of transmitting infectious diseases by using a common communion cup exists, but that the risk is so small that it is undetectable.” See “Risk of Infectious Disease Transmission from a Common Communion Cup,” Manangan, Lilia P. et al. *American Journal of Infection Control*, Volume 26, Issue 5, 538-539.

<sup>2</sup> Anne LaGrange Loving quoted in William Lobdell, “Does Communion Cup Runneth Over With Germs?,” *Los Angeles Times*, 1 January 2005.