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Dear People of the Diocese,

In the early days of the Covid pandemic, one of the adjustments made was suspending the practice of sharing communion from the chalice. As Covid restrictions have been lifted, some have asked me about reintroducing the option of communion from the chalice in our diocese of Ballarat.

When I wrote about this in April this year, we were actually facing a surge in Covid cases in hospitals in our diocese and medical advisors were concerned because of the greater risk of various infections in winter. So, even though some other dioceses in Australia had reintroduced communion from the chalice by then, I indicated that we would wait a while longer. However, now that we are looking towards the warmer months of the year, I consider that it is time to reintroduce the option of communion from the chalice.

In the diocese of Ballarat, communities may reintroduce the option of communion from the chalice from November 1 this year.

From All Saints Day, local communities will be free to offer communion from the chalice to any of the faithful who wish to take this option. I leave it to the judgment of the Parish Priest or Administrator in each place to arrange when and how communion is offered from the chalice. The practices may vary from place to place. However, the common aim is to allow the faithful to receive Christ under the appearance of wine as well as under the appearance of bread, following the words of Jesus "Take and eat" and "Take and drink". In this way, communion is more clearly a sign of sharing in Christ's heavenly banquet.

In making the chalice available, care should be taken to follow good hygiene practices. The person ministering the chalice should wipe the rim of the chalice inside and out with a purifier before offering the chalice to the next communicant. Anyone who is feeling unwell should refrain from taking the chalice. After Mass, it is good to wash chalices in hot water.

From All Saints Day, communicants in our diocese will again have the option of communion from the chalice. May the revival of this practice enrich our celebration of communion with Christ and with one another.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul