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## **Orthodox Diocese of Nyeri and Mt Kenya - His Grace Bishop Neofitos expresses concerns over COVID-19 and Holy Communion**



**His Grace Bishop Neofitos of the Diocese of Nyeri and Mt Kenya has expressed his concerns over Covid-19 and Holy Communion.**

“Since we were invaded or attacked by the Covid -19 Pandemic (Corona Virus), there have been a great concern amongst the Orthodox faithful on matters health on how to receive holy communion. Of course you all know that we commune from the same common cup (chalice) and receive or distribute using one spoon to the faithful. Since the spread of the virus the ministry of health have advised that such practice pauses a health risk to the faithful because the virus contagious and communicable as well. Now the question; what do we do??!

I have learned that the Orthodox church of Austria have temporarily resolved to go back to the typikon of St. James of receiving holy communion ! Is this the way to

go? Could be!

In as much as this is a good spiritual remedy, or development worth consideration in terms its pastoral application from the Orthodox church of Austria, it therefore demands a theological consensus going into to the future for the sake of the unity of ecclesia and communion of the saints! It was actually brought up at the council in Crete 2016, but it was not exhausted. Therefore, It is time we revisit not only because of Covid-19 pandemic but being mindful of the now and the future. If a consensus is reached that binds and not divides then a major 21st century theological challenge will have been addressed.

Receiving Communion from one spoon and one chalice (cup) especially in Africa where we are susceptible to various types of communicable diseases is becoming a great concern and a threat to human health because of our geographical setting and seldom advancement in healthcare and disease treatment. The question is; If only shaking hands is being prohibited how about eating and drinking from the same?

While addressing this spiritual phenomenon about receiving communion from the same spoon and drinking from the same cup (chalice), it must be made clear that; what is contained in the chalice and what is received from the spoon in Faith and the fear of God is holy and truly the precious blood and body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The question is about the health of the one who receives? How healthy is he/she? Of which some may not be even aware! For example, humanly speaking, Do you deny someone who has wounds on his mouth to receive holy communion? If the answer is no, then, are you not risking yourself and others at the same time? Because the same spoon will be returned back into the chalice for communing the rest of the faithful.

Am sure if Christ was physically present, he would have given a solution because he is a solution in himself. Well,he has charged us with his responsibility ofcourse.

The Orthodox church in Africa, and not africa alone, the whole Orthodox world I believe must urgently address this spiritual concern before it becomes a dilemma. As Bishop's in Africa, these are tough questions we are asked every day and answered are needed because the church must move forward. Wisdom let us attend!"

[Source](#)