

## The View from the Sanctuary

One of the delights of being “on Chalice” is the view from the Sanctuary as the President issues the Invitation to Communion. If the Chalice-bearer is sitting towards the front, he/she often thinks that the congregation is quite small; just turning your head around doesn’t give a good enough view to estimate actual attendance figures.

So it is both a pleasure and a privilege to look down the aisle from the Sanctuary and see the queue starting to form behind the choir as the Invitation is issued and as the Host is raised. So many more communicants than we first thought. And even though there are 4 chalice-bearers, and even though we stand to the side in the ‘wings’ of the Cathedral, it can be a long job, even if some of you take the Bread only, and others elect a Blessing only.

But it never fails to give satisfaction, and one feature that will be important to us all is the chance to look you in the eye as we hand you the Cup in celebration. It’s better than passing the peace, which so often involves a brief handshake and an even briefer glance into your neighbour’s eye. This is a true act of hospitality, which lies at the very heart of our faith, conferring equal blessing on both giver and taker. And it is possibly the most important (and nerve wracking) role for lay members of our congregation, as we stand alongside our ordained brothers and sisters to deliver that remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice.

Nerve-wracking because it is a very public role, whether at the altar rail pre-Covid or at the side as at present.

And then there’s the washing up afterwards. This is a vital reminder that hospitality has its behind-the-scenes aspect too. Jugs must be boiled, vessels retrieved and cleansed, and precious objects safely stowed until the next Eucharistic feast.

Another privilege if your hearing is at all good is to catch the Anthem as it is sung in your background once the Choir has regained its seats. It is a nice thought that the wine has somehow fortified the singing!

We need volunteers to maintain the services we tend to take for granted. If administering the wine is something you could consider, talk to the Wardens or Clergy. You may find that you gain much in giving comparatively little.