

***Many have asked about the administration of the Sacrament in this season that we find ourselves via various forms of social media and other digital outlets. It is the position of Bishop Palmer and the Cabinet that yes you can administer the sacrament of communion, as long as, you and your congregation understand the notion of In Extremis.***

***In Extremis*** is a Latin term that entered in to the which came out of the European “Black Death” plague. It means, ***in an extremely difficult situation***, and came into being around the year 1530. <sup>1</sup> ***In Extremis***; arising out of contexts marked by extreme suffering and/or injustice... is marked by a willingness to respond to the invitation to go beyond one’s own situation and capacities, to accept overwhelming and powerlessness, (and) to adopt the undefended posture of Christian hospitality...”<sup>2</sup> ***In Extremis*** is the position of engaging in ministry because we are dealing with an extremely difficult situation which requires us to the posture of Christian hospitality.

***In Extremis*** has some more modern examples. For example, on the other side of the 911 Attacks on The United States in September 2001, the Roman Catholic church in the NYC area approved allowing the full Requiem Mass vs. a Memorial Mass, the difference is the presence of a physical body and in a Requiem Mass Communion is served. While no body was present for most of these services A Requiem Mass was allowed. This policy change was ***In Extremis*** and was deeply meaningful to thousands of people in the diocese’s affected.

My first baptism occurred when I was a CPE student in seminary, of a dying child in the hospital where I was serving. A Roman Catholic family, the rite was conducted , ***In Extremis***, as I was an un-ordained person.

Later, as an ordained pastor in the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church I served Communion to a member who was a patient was on a respirator. I held up the Bread and the Cup. No one in the room received the elements but

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Online publication, 2020, Incorporated.

<sup>2</sup> Slee, Nocola, [Theological reflection in extremis: remembering Srebrenica\\*](#) Pages 30-43, Published online: 01 Apr 2019

everyone knew we had received the body and the blood of Christ. It was Communion *In Extremis*.<sup>3</sup>

This however is not a license to continue this practice when things return to normal. Within our Wesleyan heritage we must remember the place of the Elder in regard to the Sacrament and those others are licensed for sacerdotal ministries. “Wesley’s original assumption is that his Methodists would commune as he did-at the local Anglican Church. He firmly believed that the Lord’s Supper should be officiated by an Ordained Elder.”<sup>4</sup> Page 202

It is the position of Bishop Palmer and the Cabinet, that this privilege is for a season and must be ended in accordance to our polity and Discipline.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rev. Dr. Todd D. Anderson, Conference Superintendent, The West Ohio Annual Conference, The Ohio River Valley District, The United Methodist Church.

<sup>4</sup> Maddox, Randy L., Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology, Page 202, Kingswood Books, Nashville, TN., 1994.

<sup>5</sup> West Ohio Cabinet vote In Session, March 19, 2020.