

## Coronavirus - Advice for Parishes

The global spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a fast-evolving situation. We are currently observing Stage 2 guidance in our Coronavirus advice for parishes.

This guidance is kept under continuous review, to read the latest advice from Bishop's Conference please click [here](#).

### Letter to parishes from Bishop Richard, 12 March 2020:

Dear Father,

Following the recent guidance issued via the Deans in the response to the Covid-19 virus, in order to reduce possible transmission, every parish must now move from Stage 1 measures to Stage 2 measures. Accordingly, I hereby direct that the following special pastoral measures are to be implemented across the Diocese until further notice.

- The sign of peace is to be suspended at Mass. In order not to create confusion in the minds of the lay faithful, I request that all priests simply omit any reference to the offering of the sign of peace, prior to the *Agnus Dei*.
- Holy Communion from the chalice shall cease to be offered to the lay faithful. The practice of intinction is not to be introduced as an alternative. Similarly, Holy Communion from the chalice should not to be given to Deacons.
- Those who choose to receive Holy Communion on the tongue should be encouraged to receive on the hand instead. Those who find it especially difficult to not to receive on the tongue should be asked to receive Holy Communion after those who receive on the hand. You may judge it helpful to remind people of the value of a Spiritual Communion, mindful that the Sunday Obligation is to join in the celebration of Mass.
- Holy water stoups in churches and chapels are to be emptied.
- Churches and chapels that are open daily for private prayer should continue to remain open. Care should be given to ensuring that surfaces of high contact (e.g. light switches, door handles and areas around the door) are regularly sanitised throughout the day.
- Ministers should wash and also sanitise their hands before and after distributing Holy Communion. Shared towels should not be used in toilet areas or the sacristy.
- Shared hymnbooks and Mass books should cease to be used. Single-use Mass sheets may be used; though these should be disposed of immediately after use.
- All catering in parish halls is to cease. This includes such gatherings as refreshments after Mass and any catering for groups that may be hiring parish halls.

It will be important to provide frequent reminders about thorough hand washing for all who attend Mass and other events in parishes.

These measures will be reviewed in response to the advice of Public Health England and parishes advised accordingly.

Finally, I would ask you to include an intention in the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass for all those who are affected by the virus, either as patients, family members or those involved in healthcare.

With prayers and good wishes,

+R

**CORONAVIRUS**

If you are vulnerable, i.e. elderly, have a weakened immune system, a long term condition such as cancer, diabetes or heart disease, you are recommended to refrain from large parish gatherings.

If you or members of your family have cold or 'flu symptoms, you are asked not to attend the church or parish functions.

Hand cleansers will be available at the church entrance.

At the time of writing supplies of hand cleanser have run out/depleted. Please bring your own for the time being.

Holy Water stoops have been emptied.

The Mass sheets will be distributed please take home with you after Mass. Please do not leave in the benches for someone else to clear.

The newsletter will be published but you are asked to take your copy home and not leave it in the church. Holy Communion will only be given in the form of the host and on the hand. Ministers will have cleansed their hands with antiseptic gel and will avoid hand to hand contact.

There will be no sign of peace.

Hymn books and other shared liturgical books will be withdrawn to avoid cross contamination.

We will, as far as possible, produce hymn sheets for Masses please take your copy home with you and bring it back each week.

The collection baskets will not be passed round. Collectors will be at the back of the church at the end of Mass.

The best way of protecting us from spread is for everyone to use universal good hygiene, which will effectively disrupt spread of the virus.

- i. Catch it-sneeze into a tissue
- ii. Bin it-bin the tissue
- iii. Kill it-wash your hands with soap and water
- iv. Do not touch your face unless you've washed your hands