



# AD CLERUM

The Right Reverend John Stead  
Bishop of Willochra

5<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **RESPONDING TO THE CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19)**

The following is intended to assist with the response within the Parishes, Ministry Districts and Ministries of the Diocese. Please ensure that it is made available to members of the church community.

### **General Guidelines**

The World Health Organisation (WHO), and reflected in the Commonwealth Department of Health's website, has recommended the following necessary protective measures against the new coronavirus (Covid-19). Take care of your health and protect others by doing the following:

#### Wash your hands frequently

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

**Why?** Washing your hands with soap and water (for 20 seconds) or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

#### Maintain social distancing

Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

**Why?** When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.

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### Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

**Why?** Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

### Practice respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

**Why?** Droplets spread the virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from illnesses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

### If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

**Why?** National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to direct you to the right health facility quickly. This will also protect you and help prevent the spread of viruses and other infections.

### Stay informed and follow the advice given by your healthcare provider

Stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19. Follow the advice provided by your healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority or your employer on how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

**Why?** National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area. They are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.

### **Church Response:**

Churches *should already be following best-hygiene practices* that include advising parishioners with coughs and sneezes to refrain from handshaking during The Peace and to receive Communion in one kind only.

At present, no advice suggests the use of the Common Cup should be suspended. The cup (chalice) must be made of a noble metal; the wine must be fortified (port), the cup (chalice) must be wiped on both the outside and inside, with a clean linen/cotton purificator between people receiving the wine. People administering the wine must be trained appropriately.

The cup (chalice) and paten are, on each occasion, to be scalded in boiling hot water and air dried after the Communion. In some cases this will mean that they need to be taken to another place to be cleaned.

In the few places where the option of grape juice is allowed the grape juice should be provided in individual glasses which are either thoroughly washed (preferably in a dishwasher) and air dried, or in disposable cups.

It is also best practice for churches to have hand-sanitisers available for parishioners to use.

Also, priests presiding at the Eucharist, communion administrators and servers should wash their hands, preferably with an alcohol-based (minimum 60%) hand-sanitiser before 'The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving'.

Intinction (dipping the wafer into a chalice) is not recommended (even by celebrants or communion-administrators) as this represents an infection transmission route as well as a risk to those with specific allergies.

Equally, placing the bread on the tongue of a person receiving the host is not to occur as it is easy for the person distributing the bread to touch the tongue.

Where there is a concern, communion may be taken in one kind (the bread/wafer).

Best hygiene practice should continue to be observed in all pastoral contacts.

### **Use of Surgical Masks**

The Health Department website recommends that surgical masks in the community are only helpful in preventing people who have coronavirus disease from spreading it to others. If you are well, you do not need to wear a surgical mask as there is little evidence supporting the widespread use of surgical masks in healthy people to prevent transmission in public.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'B' and a cross symbol to its left.

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