

# URGENT! - Coronavirus update from Bishop Mark

## CORONAVIRUS – STAGE TWO OF THE CHURCH’S RESPONSE BEGINNING TODAY 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020

As we face the spread of the Coronavirus in all parts of the country I received from the Bishops Conference of England and Wales today **the recommendation that all parishes and communities now move to STAGE TWO OF THE PUBLISHED ADVICE.**

In summary the recommendations drawn up as guidance by Professor Jim McManus in co-ordination with officials from Public Health England are:

1. To suspend distribution of the Holy Communion under both kinds and recommend the host be received in the hand only
2. Exercise the greatest care when giving Holy Communion in the hand to ensure you do not touch the hands of the recipient – we must ensure the washing and sanitising of our hands
3. Suspend the physical sign of peace
4. Remove holy water from all stoups
5. Cease the veneration of relics by physical contact and the public veneration of the Cross on Good Friday should not be undertaken by kissing or any physical contact
6. Advise the most vulnerable to refrain from large parish gatherings
7. Cease to use collection plates which are passed from hand to hand
8. Cease to use hymn books and hand missals
9. Ask everyone attending Mass to sanitise their hands as they come into church using sanitized gel dispensers where possible
10. Ensure good hygiene at Mass and parish gatherings – display the public information poster
11. Ensure the very regular cleaning of all surfaces which people touch regularly (ideally clean door hands before and after every Mass)
12. Ensure that any extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion before and after assisting with the distribution of Holy Communion should wash their hands before proceeding to the sanctuary or discreetly use good quality hand gel
13. When visiting parishioners wash your hands before giving the Sacraments. Offer phone support to parishioners who are self-isolating and it is recommended that we do not make pastoral visits until the period of self-isolating ends.
14. Visits to Care Homes or Hospitals should be undertaken following the advice from the staff on infection control
15. Suspend catering at parish gatherings (coffee, tea etc) where multiple people may touch mugs, utensils, biscuits etc.

