

JOHN



ARCHBISHOP OF SOUTHWARK

SUSPENDING THE SIGN OF PEACE AND RECEPTION FROM THE CHALICE AT MASS TO REDUCE RISKS OF COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS TRANSMISSION

In response to the Covid-19 virus, in order to reduce possible transmission, I am introducing the following special pastoral measures, effective from 9 March 2020 to 6 April 2020 when they will be reviewed.

- 1) 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 and deacons simply omit any reference to the offering of the sign of peace, prior to the *Agnus Dei*.
- 2) 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.
- 3) Those who choose to receive Holy Communion on the tongue should be encouraged to receive on the hand instead. Their doing this represents an act of loving charity to their community.
- 4) Holy water stoups in churches and chapels are to be emptied.
- 5) 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 sanitized throughout the day.
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) A decision will be made nearer the time as to whether on Good Friday, the traditional 'Veneration of the Cross' is to be observed by a simple genuflection.

Given at Southwark on 9 March 2020

Signed

The Most Reverend John Wilson
Archbishop of Southwark

Rev Philip Glandfield
Vice-Chancellor