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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.

- 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 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. Similarly, Holy Communion from the chalice should not to be given to Deacons.
- 3) 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.
- 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 sanitised 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) 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,

+Richard