



To all clergy

Tuesday 10 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Coronavirus COVID-19

We are writing to inform you that we have updated our guidance in relation to suspension of the Common Cup and other practical steps in response to Coronavirus Covid-19. The full guidance is [online](#), but the relevant update is as follows:

It is our view, in light of the continued increase of Covid-19 cases in the United Kingdom, that it is now necessary to suspend the administration of the chalice as well as physical contact during the sharing of the peace, blessing or "laying on of hands".

We therefore advise that all priests should:-

- *Offer Communion in one kind only to all communicants i.e. the consecrated bread/wafer/host, with the priest alone taking the wine;*
- *suspend handshaking or other direct physical contact during the sharing of the peace;*
- *suspend direct physical contact as part of a blessing or 'laying on of hands'.*

We hope the guidance is clear and self-explanatory.

From today, when we preside at the Eucharist at Lambeth Palace and at Bishopthorpe Palace, we are going to give communion in one kind only (the bread) and will not share the peace nor lay on hands for blessings

This is an important issue but it is only one of the very many matters that you will be considering at this demanding time.

We want to assure you all of our prayers and thoughts as across the country, communities consider what steps they can take to care and support one another. We are certain that plans are being made around the country to care in particular for the elderly, vulnerable and the isolated; it is crucial that we give attention to those most at risk.

We are all in this together and we all must be alert to the challenges and the demands that we might face. We are seeking national advice regularly and are very grateful to all those who are working with us. Clearly, none of us knows precisely how the current situation will develop so we need to pray and work to be prepared for all reasonable eventualities.

Thank you again for all you are doing up and down the country to encourage one another, to care for one another and to provide resources to enable people to respond appropriately in these uncertain times.

May we also pray for all those working in our health service and in leadership roles. We are grateful for their dedication, expertise and hard work.

As we journey through this season of Lent we are all aware of the challenges that face us day by day. Now we need to continue to work together and to pray for each other, showing compassion and resilience and above all, caring especially for those who are marginalised in our societies.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Welby" with "Archbishop of Canterbury" written below it in a smaller, less legible script.

The Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Sentamu" with "Archbishop of York" written below it in a smaller, less legible script.

The Most Revd & Rt Hon John Sentamu
Archbishop of York