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TO: The Clergy and Parishes of the Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island

Date: March 12th, 2020

Pastoral Letter with regards to COVID 19

Yesterday the Coronavirus COVID 19 was declared to be a pandemic according to the World Health Organization. In practical terms this declaration doesn't mean much. The disease is already having a profound effect around the world. As of this morning, there are no known cases in Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island, and there is very limited community transmission anywhere in Canada. We cannot be complacent about this situation. It is almost certain that there will be transmission of this disease within our diocese. We will continue to monitor developments closely and provide relevant advice and direction to parishes. Public Health Authorities have begun to focus on "Social Distancing" as a means to slow the spread of the virus. With this in mind:

General Health Care Directions

- We need to continue to emphasize the practices that individuals need to take to decrease the likelihood of viral or bacterial infection.
- Wash hands, Wash Hands, Wash Hands is the refrain from Public Health – Do it, promote it. Use soap and hot water, wash regularly and thoroughly for 20 - 30 seconds.
- If it is not possible to use soap and water, use 60% alcohol based hand sanitizer. Place Hand sanitizer in strategic places in church buildings.
- Cough or sneeze into your arm rather than hand. If you cough or sneeze into a tissue, dispose of it immediately.
- Don't touch your face.
- Stay home from work, school or any activities if you are ill.
- Strengthen and increase the frequency of the sanitization of spaces and surfaces: Where possible, we need to use antiseptic cleaners (a bleach solution or other effective antiseptic cleaners) for surfaces that people in our parishes touch (e.g., tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, handles, toilets, sinks). We also need to increase the frequency of cleaning our spaces and surfaces. Clean high touch surfaces often.

Liturgical Considerations

- While there is no evidence that the Common Cup is a threat to health, as concerns about touching any surfaces become greater, I now ask you to withdraw the Common Cup entirely for a period of time. What this would mean is that the celebrant would consecrate a cup of wine and would leave it on the altar during the administration of the bread, after which time, the celebrant would consume the wine. Communion will be offered in one kind only to all communicants i.e. the consecrated bread/wafer/host, with the priest alone taking the wine. While there is no medical evidence to connect drinking from the chalice to getting the flu, at this time it seems prudent to suspend our usual practice. Anglican sacramental theology has taught that the fullness of the sacrament is present in each element; therefore receiving the consecrated bread is receiving Communion.
- Intinction is not to be allowed -under any circumstances.