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February 27th 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

This evening we heard the news that the COVID-19 virus has now spread into Quebec. Although only one case has been reported, many of us remember the SARS crisis and the precautions that were needed during that health crisis.

First, our prayers are extended to those who are ill with this virus and those who are caring for them, especially those at the epicentres of this outbreak in China, Iran, and Italy. The provincial public health officials are monitoring this issue and provide updated information on their website:

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/>.

It is prudent to ensure that we have reviewed our practices in pastoral care and public worship to keep everyone, especially the most vulnerable due to age or infirmity, safe and to allay fears that may arise.

Here are some areas to consider in your parish:

- i) Hygiene practices in pastoral care and worship:
 - a. Availability of hand sanitizer in the worship space for parishioners and those serving in the liturgy
 - b. Celebrants washing their hands before administering communion
 - c. Congregations sharing the peace in a manner that avoids physical contact
 - d. Pastoral care workers taking all precautions in personal hygiene before and after pastoral visits in hospital and homes
 - e. Reminding parishioners who are ill, or suspect they may be, to stay at home to recover and to request home communion or a pastoral visit as desired.

- ii) If concern about the common cup is expressed:
 - a. Refresh teaching regarding our theology of the fullness of communion in one kind (bread or wine only)
 - b. Sharing the national information re; *Eucharistic Practice and the Risk of Infection*: <https://www.anglican.ca/faith/worship/pir/euc-practice-infection/>.
 - c. Alternatives to the common cup:
 - i. Receive in one kind only (bread)
 - ii. Touching the base of the cup as it is presented but not consuming
 - iii. Intinction by the celebrant – if a communicant wishes to intinct they may indicate this to the celebrant who will intinct the host for them and place it on their tongue.

We pray that our common life in worship and pastoral care will be rooted in the compassion of Christ and appropriate care for one another in a time of uncertainty.

Clergy and lay leaders should stay abreast of their local news, the provincial government's website, and be diligent in checking for emails from the Synod Office on this issue. This communiqué is based on that of our Primate dated the 27th of January 2020.

The Venerable Dr Edward Simonton OGS
Commissary & Vicar General