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DIOCÈSE ANGLICAN MONTRÉAL

Updated Directives in Response to COVID-19

Thursday 12 March 2020

Dear friends in the Dioceses of Quebec and Montreal,

On March 11 the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic. On that same day the first case of coronavirus was diagnosed within the boundaries of the Diocese of Quebec.

Out of an abundance of caution and a particular desire to protect those most vulnerable to the spread of this virus, the following liturgical measures are to be implemented in all congregations of the Diocese of Quebec and the Diocese of Montreal, effective immediately and until further notice:

1. **The sharing of the common cup is to be suspended at celebrations of the eucharist.** The presiding priest is to consecrate both the bread and the wine, consume in both kinds, but administer only the consecrated bread to the congregation. Similarly, when holy communion is distributed from the reserved sacrament, only the bread will be offered. Although cherished Anglican practice is that all communicants normally receive both the bread and wine at the eucharist, the church also teaches that we still fully participate in holy communion in receiving “in one kind.” Small, individual communion cups are not to be used as an alternative to the common cup during this time.
2. **Avoid physical contact during the exchange of the peace and the offertory.** Normally during the liturgy members of the congregation are invited to exchange a sign of Christ’s peace, which typically takes the form of a handshake or an embrace. For now, please exchange a simple bow instead and continue to bid one another Christ’s peace verbally. Similarly, the offering should be taken up in such a way that avoids multiple people touching the collection plate.

Please also continue to follow the other hygienic recommendations provided in the diocesan statements distributed in February. These include ensuring that hand sanitizer is available in each church, presiders washing or sanitizing their hands before distributing communion, and staying home if you are ill.

Also be attentive to the advice of provincial and federal public health officials, particularly with respect to practices like social distancing. We would invite you to be especially mindful of any members of our communities—especially elderly ones—who may feel especially isolated and vulnerable during this time and might require assistance or even just a telephone call.

Finally, we bid your prayers for those afflicted by this disease, for caregivers, medical professionals, public health officials, and those researching a treatment and cure for COVID-19. Pray also for those whose livelihoods are threatened by the economic impact of this pandemic. May all that we say and do during this uncertain time be grounded in faith and hope in God’s providence, and be a reflection of Christ’s compassion and love.

The Rt. Rev. Bruce Myers
Bishop of Quebec

The Rt. Rev. Mary Irwin-Gibson
Bishop of Montreal