

THE RIGHT REVEREND CLAUDE BERKLEY, TSSF, CMTT, BA. (Theol)(Hons), MPhil.
Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago

Residence: (868) 622-1324
Office: (868) 622-7387
Fax: (868) 628-1319
Email: diocesett@gmail.com
cberkley@theanglicanchurchtt.com
Website: www.theanglicanchurchtt.com



Hayes Court
21 Maraval Road,
Port of Spain,
Trinidad and Tobago

March 2, 2020

Circular to Clergy - COVID-19 March 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Archbishop Howard Gregory has communicated with the Bishops and the faithful of the Church in the Province of the West Indies (CPWI). While he acknowledges the need to manage the circumstances in the particular contexts of the CPWI, he is sure that we must respond appropriately and, in a manner, consistent with the instructions from the Health Authorities. We must be a part of the solution to the challenge even as we as church ensure that great care and responsibility are exercised in the manner in which we treat with the congregations as they come together for worship and as they live out their individual and family lives.

The Archbishop drew attention to the heightened emphasis given to healthy hygienic practices given by the Local Health Authorities and Regional Bodies, PAHO, CARPHA. In the words of CARPHA Executive Director, "It is recommended that persons maintain basic hand and respiratory hygiene, and avoid close contact, when possible, with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing." He has therefore directed that we immediately pursue and promote best-hygiene practices for the advice of parishioners.

As a consequence, we are reminded of that which we outlined in my letter to the clergy on February 6th, 2020 and we repeat and add to the same in responding to COVID-19:

- Intinction placed in the hand as a safeguard against new contamination and spread is allowed.
- Previous protocols allowed receiving in one kind only; and the receipt of Body and Blood as in the passing of the Common Cup. This remains in effect.
- Keeping the hands clean at all times.
- Avoidance of touching the face with unclean hands
- Encouraging parishioners who are experiencing symptoms to stay away from gatherings until better.
- Boosting of ones' immune system.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with your flexed elbow or with a tissue; dispose of the tissue immediately and wash your hands.
- We are to refrain from handshaking especially during The Peace. Use a fist bump, slight bow, elbow bump, physical non-contact gesture.

- Parishioners with respiratory symptoms should be encouraged to receive in one kind only.
- According to the state of emergence of the virus in our nation, use of the Common Cup may be suspended.
- Churches should ensure that that soap is available in all bathrooms, with hand sanitizers where possible.
- Clergy presiding at the Eucharist, chalice bearers and servers should wash their hands, preferably with an alcohol based (minimum 60%) hand sanitizer.
- Hand rails and Altar rails should be cleaned before and after each service.
- Attention should be paid to handling money and checking and processing same.

Please bear in mind that best hygiene practice should continue to be observed in all pastoral contacts. Similarly, there is still much uncertainty that abounds in terms of the virus and its manifestation and people's response to this development. We are to appeal for calm and good sense in making ourselves ready for what seems to be a pending pandemic. Please utilize health professionals in your midst to educate and guide and make ready God's people for their life at church, at home and in the wider community in the face of COVID-19.

With all the best practice in hand and respiratory hygiene, pray earnestly for deliverance of the nation from this disease.

Yours respectfully,

+ Claude Trinidad *of* Tobago.

N.B. Intinction has not been banned.

Receiving from the Chalice has NOT yet been suspended as reported by the Trinidad Express, Tuesday March 3, 2020, page 4. The conversation was misrepresented.

Kindly bring this to the direct attention of your congregations.

2/.....