

# PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL

The Very Reverend Dr Anthony Cane BA MPhil PhD  
Dean of Portsmouth

20<sup>th</sup> February 2020

*Dear member of the Cathedral community*

As Lent 2020 approaches, I am writing to you about two rather different subjects: consultations on the new Cathedral strategy, and national advice relating to the so-called 'coronavirus' (which the World Health Organisation has named 'COVID-19').

## **Cathedral Strategy:**

I am pleased to invite you to contribute to the development of a new strategy and vision for the Cathedral, as we move into the 2020s and our 2027 centenary comes into view. Chapter have been working on identifying six strategic objectives, and is now keen to consult on a draft version of these, which will be available on the Cathedral website from 1 March, with paper copies available at the consultations. Members of the Cathedral community are invited to attend one of these; on either Tuesday 10 March at 7.00pm, or Sunday 15 March beginning as close to 12noon as is possible after the 10.30am Sung Eucharist. Both meetings will be in Becket Hall, and will last no more than an hour. An update on Cathedral finances will be included. I do encourage you to attend, as the new strategy will shape the life and work of the Cathedral in the coming years.

## **The 'Coronavirus' (COVID-19)**

Firstly, I invite you to pray for those infected by the coronavirus in China and around the world, for those who care for them, for health specialists and authorities who are combatting the spread of infection, and of course for all who at this time are feeling anxious, especially for those with friends and family in China.

The World Health Organization has declared that this is a public health emergency of international concern. The risk to the public in the UK is currently set at moderate, which permits the government to plan for all eventualities. The number of cases in the UK is very small, and the situation is being kept under close review. If necessary, I will issue an update on the summary of national advice given below:

The advice is that it is as well to be prepared for what we hope and expect will not happen; that the 'moderate' risk assessment needs to be upgraded. In particular this has implications for Holy Communion. While it is our faith that the sacraments are a means of grace and not of sickness, they are physically administered, and we should take physical care. Clergy presiding at the Eucharist, communion administrators and servers are reminded to wash hands. At the Cathedral we already using hand sanitizer for those involved in the Eucharist.

The national advice is to avoid the practice of intinction (dipping the consecrated bread into the wine) as this could represent an infection transmission route. Intinction can also introduce traces of gluten into the wine, which is not helpful to people with gluten allergies. Those with coughs and sneezes are encouraged to receive the bread only (it is Anglican teaching that to receive the sacrament in one kind only – the bread – is to receive the sacrament in its entirety) and to avoid shaking hands during the peace. It is enough simply to say 'peace be with you', preferably whilst making eye contact.

*With my prayers and best wishes,*

*Anthony*

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