

Antiochian Orthodox
Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and
Ireland



الأبرشية الإنطاكية
المسيحية الأرثوذكسية
للجزر البريطانية و إيرلندا

Registered Charity Number: 1175538

Archbishop: His Eminence, Metropolitan Silouan Oner

THE CORONAVIRUS – PARISH GUIDANCE

3rd March 2020

Fathers, brothers and sisters in Christ,

Some of you may have become quite alarmed at the rate of spread of the coronavirus across the world, although the number of definite infections in the UK at the moment is quite low. We must put ourselves in God's merciful care and trust Him to get us through this.

We must also ensure that no one is put at risk. Please observe the following:

1. Continue your usual practice and do not come to church if you have developed flu-like symptoms, whether this is flu or something else.
2. Definitely call the NHS on 111 if you have had any contact with anyone diagnosed with the virus or have the signs of the infection (bad cough, fever, breathing difficulties and/or muscle pain).
3. Follow simple rules of hygiene:
 - Avoid touching your face when out and about and always wash your hands or use a hand sanitising gel after possible hand exposure.
 - Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not your hand.
 - Use the hand cleansing gel now provided in church, both when you enter and when you leave. We are used to doing this in hospitals, so it's no big deal.
 - Try using your left hand (if you are right-handed and vice versa for left handedness) when touching surfaces in public places. That way, if you do inadvertently touch your face, you won't be using a contaminated hand.

As far as church life is concerned, there need be no drastic changes. As we know, no infectious disease has ever been recorded as having been caught through Holy Communion in the 'common cup'. This is true not only from the faith perspective but also from many scientific studies that have been done over the years.

Let us all work together to keep each other safe. Follow the advice and instructions given to us all by the government.

Above all, do not think that faith and scientifically informed wisdom and common sense are alternatives. They are not. We need all of these!

+ Silouan, Metropolitan of the British Isles and Ireland

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+Silouan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right from the end of the word.

Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East

