



## A Guide for responding to Holy Communion at home

### *Introduction*

During our “stay home” situation due to COVID-19, the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne has encouraged all parishes to keep sharing in fellowship in remembrance of Jesus’ death and resurrection and has provided some helpful guidelines for a variety of faith-building practices.

In our setting, there are two helpful ways to keep remembering Jesus’ sacrifice for us and to experience the blessings promised to believers.

#### 1. Agape meals

We encourage people in their households to participate remotely in a similar practice seen in the ancient Christian tradition of the “agape meal” or “love feast” (Jude 12). Some may gather remotely and remember Jesus as present with them, as did the early Christians, whilst “breaking bread and eating food with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2.46).

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### *Spiritual Communion*

After you have watched a presentation of Holy Communion on a livestream of a worship service, the following order of words and responses may be helpful for appropriating the benefits of the promises of Holy Communion by faith, even though we cannot join with others as a church.

*Read the following aloud...*

**Jesus said, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’ (John 6.35).**

*Reflect on the day and on your relationships...*

What good things have come from God today? Where have I fallen short? What might I do tomorrow? How does the resurrection of our Lord change everything?

*Say aloud...*

**Christ, have mercy.**

**Lord, have mercy.**

*Pray for...*

The needs of the world, for your local community, and for those close to you.

*Close your prayers with the Lord's Prayer, saying...*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

*Give thanks for...* the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask in prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit that God's presence will be you now.

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and sibling, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

*Close with these words in prayer...*

**All of my problems, I send to the cross of Christ.**

**All of my difficulties, I send to the cross of Christ.**

**All of the devil's works, I send to the cross of Christ.**

**All of my hopes, I set on the risen Christ;**

**Thanks be to God. Amen**

Abridged notes regarding *Spiritual Communion* from Bishop Brad Billings, Diocese of Melbourne:

The celebration of, and participation in, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is an important part of Anglican worship, being described by the Articles of Religion (28) as "the Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death." ...the inability to receive the sacrament is one of the great difficulties and griefs for many Anglicans at this time, as we rejoice that the reading and proclamation of Scripture (the Ministry of the Word), the confession and absolution of sins, and the blessing, are able to continue more readily remotely, by technological means. It is important in these circumstances that we act in accordance with the received heritage and theology of the *Book of Common Prayer*. ...For those especially feeling the absence of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Spiritual Communion (see further below) ...It broadly describes a means of grace whereby a person who has been unable to share in the celebration of Holy Communion for some unavoidable or serious reason, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus (e.g. 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* service for "The Communion of the Sick" and in *A Prayer Book for Australia 1995* p. 693). Helpfully, it declares, "if for good reason it is not possible... to receive the sacrament, the minister shall give assurance that all who repent of their sins, trust in Christ, and celebrate his saving work with grateful thanks, truly eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, even though the bread may not have been eaten, or the wine drunk." Most Anglicans are being prevented from physically receiving the sacrament by the current pandemic. Whether experiencing the sickness ourselves in a physical way, or not, we are certainly experiencing its ramifications, with a result that we are being impeded from receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It is instructive in this connection that under the Canon law of the Church of England, Spiritual Communion fulfils ...receiving Holy Communion... (Canon B 15).