

### **'Spiritual Communion'**

This idea may be new to some of us but is commended as something we may find helpful while we are isolated and unable to meet together and celebrate the Eucharist. From the Archbishop's guidance notes:

*"The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ. [This] form of prayer offers Christians an opportunity to give thanks for their communion with Christ, particularly at times when they would ordinarily be present at the Eucharist.*

*The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves. Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion 'regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost' (Canon B 15).*

*The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'."*

In the spirit of the Bishop's guidance I offer the form of prayer below for your use at this time. I will myself celebrate the Eucharist at home, on **Maundy Thursday (9<sup>th</sup> April)** at **6:30pm** and **each Sunday** during the Coronavirus restrictions at **10am**. I invite you to use this act of Spiritual Communion at or near those times. A form of prayer, including Spiritual Communion, especially for Easter Day is also enclosed. I pray these may be of help to us at this challenging time.

### **AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

*You may wish to find a suitable space for prayer, perhaps in front of a cross or with a candle or in a special place. This may follow Morning or Evening Prayer, or some other act of worship, or time spent reading the Scriptures, but can also be used on it's own.*

*Spend time in reflection:*

- What good things do wish to thank God for?*
- Where have you fallen short in your walk with Jesus?*
- What might you want to do differently tomorrow.*

*You may wish to pray:*

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

*continued over...*

*You may wish to read and reflect on one or more of today's Bible readings, if you have not already done so.*

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]*

*Pray for the needs of the world, our local community and for those close to you.*

*End with the Lord's prayer (Our Father...) in what ever version is familiar to you.*

*Give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with 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 brother,

may I know you more clearly,

love you more dearly,

and follow you more nearly, day by day.

Amen. *[after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester]*

*You might then add one or more of the following prayers:*

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,  
'I am with you always'.

Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.

Hear my prayers for others and for myself,

and keep me in your care. Amen.

O God,

help me to trust you,

help me to know that you are with me,

help me to believe that nothing can separate

me from your love

revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, in these days of mercy,  
make us quiet and prayerful;  
in these days of challenge,  
make us stronger in you;  
in these days of emptiness,  
take possession of us;  
in these days of waiting,  
open our hearts to  
the mystery of your cross. *[Angela Ashwin]*

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you  
most humble and hearty thanks  
for all your goodness and loving kindness.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our  
Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace,  
and for the hope of glory.  
And give us, we pray, such a sense of all  
your mercies that our hearts may be  
unfeignedly thankful,  
and that we show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips but in our lives,  
by giving up ourselves to your service,  
and by walking before you in holiness and  
righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honour and glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

Ending:

The Lord bless us,  
and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life. Amen.