**Spiritual Communion**

*Once more the Church of England, (and indeed many churches throughout the Anglican Communion), is having to put public worship on hold. So many people who would have received Holy Communion monthly, weekly or even daily, are again not able to receive the comfort and benefits of the sacrament.*

*The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York writes; “This is a huge loss. However, it is not the first time that the Church has been in such a position. Throughout Christian history some Christian people have found themselves isolated from the sacramental life of the Church for all sorts of reasons, and particularly in times of plague, famine and warfare.*

*At such times, the Church has encouraged people to make what is called a spiritual communion. It is a way of uniting yourself with Jesus and entering communion with him even though you are not able to receive the sacramental bread and wine itself. The short prayer at the heart of the service which draws on the story of the woman who comes to Jesus but only touches the hem of his garment. She still receives healing and blessing (See Mark 5. 25-34). In a way, spiritual communion is like this - we still come to Jesus and he still receives us.”*

**Spiritual Communion When Unable to Attend a Celebration of Holy Communion**

*If a household or group of people are praying together, either in person or virtually, one person may act as leader and the others as the congregation and they join in the sections in bold type. If alone read all the words aloud.*

*We recommend that you light a candle before you begin and create a quiet and reflective environment to draw closer to God. You could also have a bible, cross or crucifix to look at or some music to play.*

Our communion is always a virtual reality.

At the house in Emmaus, when Jesus broke the bread,

His disciples realised his presence with them

Even as he vanished from their sight.

When Thomas declared he would not believe

Unless he could touch and feel the wounds of the crucifixion,

Jesus invited him to touch and see – and declared a blessing

On all those who would not see, and yet would believe.

At the Ascension, angels asked the disciples why the still looked up into the sky –

They should expect now to find Jesus in everyday places.

We celebrate our communion strangely in this season,

And yet our confidence and hope is in the God

Who is always both a virtual and a real presence:

In bread, in wine, in water, in the spaces between us.

The still centre at the heart of all our circling.

**Come, living God,**

**Infuse our presence with your absence**

**And our absence with your presence.**

**Amen**

*Rev Dr. Miranda Threlfall-Holmes*

The Lord is here. **The Spirit is with us.**

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*You may want to pray the Collect of the Day.*

First Reading - Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Psalm - Psalm 62

On God alone my soul in stillness waits; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.

Gospel - John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

**Time of Prayer**

Lord, we pray for those who wrestle with mental health issues. Grant them support, care, understanding and love.

We pray for families trying to give support. Lord, supply energy, rest, patience and others to help.

We pray for the wider support network, medical professionals, support staff and volunteers. Protect them from being overwhelmed. Encourage them and give wisdom.

In Jesus’ name.

**Amen**

*(Evangelical Alliance)*

In the darker moments,

when clouds gather

and the heaviness we feel

seems overwhelming,

remind us of your love,

carrying the weight

of so much in that cross,

embracing the world

with arms outstretched

that we might know

freedom from the chains

which now constrain us.

Bring us to your light,

release our burdens

and from despair bring hope.

**Amen**

*© John Birch*

*Spend a few moments praying for the people you know and love, the needs of the world and for an end to the current Pandemic.*

Mothers’ Union COVID-19 Prayer

**Loving Lord,**

**we pray for your love and compassion to abound**

**as we walk though this challenging season.**

**We ask for wisdom for those who bear the load**

**of making decisions with widespread consequences.**

**We pray for those who are suffering with sickness**

**and for all who are caring for them**

**We ask for protection for the elderly and vulnerable**

**to not succumb to the risks of virus.**

**We pray for misinformation to be curbed**

**that fear may take no hold in hearts and minds.**

**As we exercise the good sense that you in your mercy provide**

**may we also approach each day in faith and peace,**

**trusting in the truth of your goodness towards us. Amen**

The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.**

Act of Contrition

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things, and I repent with my whole heart of having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Act of Spiritual Reception

**O loving God, in union with Christian people throughout the world and across the centuries gathered to make Eucharist, hearing your holy Word and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of your dear Son, I offer you praise and thanksgiving. Even though I am exiled from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Life I pray that you will unite me with all the baptised and with your Son who gave his life for us.**

**Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me and send your Holy Spirit that I may be filled with your presence.**

Jesus, as the hem of your garment, touched in faith, healed the woman who could not touch your body, so may the soul of your servant be healed, for though I cannot receive you in the sacrament I can, through this offering of my prayer, receive you in my heart; grant this for Christ’s sake. **Amen.**

O Lord and heavenly Father, we your humble servants entirely desire your fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching you to grant, that by the merits and death of your Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all your whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. **Amen.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

*You may wish to end with the grace.*

*This service has been adapted from the original service created by the Diocese of Chelmsford for which Fr Richard Peers gave his kind permission to slightly adapt the rite.*