



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IN SRI LANKA

Lankarama, 19, Balcombe Place, Colombo - 08, Sri Lanka.

Tel. No : 0094-11-2697062 / 2697110

Fax.No : 0094-11-2699619

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INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CLERGY RELIGIOUS AND THE FAITHFUL FROM THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IN SRI LANKA

1. Church Services and other activities:

- The celebration of Holy Masses with Congregations are suspended until further notice.
- No Pilgrimages are to be organized until the situation is normalized.
- This is a grace filled invitation to promote family prayer.
- The Clergy and the Faithful are to be instructed to cooperate with the Medical and Civil authorities in all matters.

2. Communion in the hand:

- As a temporary measure in this extreme situation, those Catholic faithful who wish to receive to receive Holy Communion in the hand are allowed to do so. But once the situation is normalized, we shall return to the normal practice of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue.
- It is important to educate and instruct people properly on how to receive Holy Communion in the hand before it is implemented: receive on the left hand palm keeping the right hand underneath respectfully, and then take the sacred species with the right hand and receive the Holy Eucharist in front of the priest / Communion Distributor.

3. Celebration of the Easter Triduum:

- Let us pray earnestly for the situation to improve.
In the event of restrictions imposed by the Government, with regard to public gatherings we shall make arrangements with the Government to telecast live the Easter Triduum services in three languages on the National Channels Island wide at the usual times the liturgical services are held in Churches. The times of



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Programmes will be announced prior to telecast and broadcast over TV and Radio channels.

- The Bishop of each Diocese has the freedom to decide on how to celebrate the Chrism Mass.
- In case the Holy Thursday mass is celebrated, the Washing of Feet being an optional part in the Holy Thursday Mass may be omitted.
- Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday could be done with a deep bow to the Cross instead of kissing the Cross.
- In this given situation, Public Way of the Cross should not be organized.
- It is important to educate and caution the faithful regarding the touching and kissing of statues.

4. Celebration of Sacraments and Sacramentals:

- The hearing of individual confessions is to be continued but precautionary measures are to be taken regarding the confessional, especially by covering the confessional grill with a thick cloth. The priest is advised to wear a protective mask.
- Baptism services could be conducted with only the family members and God parents.
- Weddings are to be celebrated with only family members and close relatives.
- The Funeral services are to be conducted with minimum participation of people.
- In this situation the Funeral Mass need not be held in the house or Church.
- The coffin should not be opened during the funeral services in the Church or the cemetery
- The Holy water fonts in churches and chapels are to be kept empty.
- All are requested not to organize any services or meetings of public gatherings.



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5. The Spirit of the Liturgical Season:

- Prayer Fasting and Almsgiving take a primary place leading to a life of repentance and belief in the good news of the paschal mystery of the passion death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.
- We are called to read the Word of God, deeply reflect and pray to interiorize the spirit of the Lenten and Eastertide Liturgical Seasons.
- Let us be in prayerful solidarity with the infected, and affected people, and the caregivers specially those in the medical profession and civil authorities.
- Let pray for the repose of the Souls of the departed victims of COVID -19.

✠ Rt. Rev. Dr. J. Winston S. Fernando, S.S.S.
Bishop of Badulla
President

✠ Rt. Rev. Dr. J. D. Anthony Jayakody
Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo
Secretary General

The Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka. The Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka

20th March 2020.

