



Archdiocese of Palo

Archdiocesan Chancery and Socio-Pastoral Center
Salvacion, 6501 Palo, Leyte, Philippines

CIRCULAR

Prctl. No. 005. s 2020

TO: ALL THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PALO

RE: UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS IN VIEW OF THE DEVELOPING PROTOCOL WITH REGARD TO COVID-19 IN THE PROVINCE OF LEYTE.

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

PEACE!

Because of developing events and with our common desire to contain and stop the virus from spreading, we are issuing this new advisory. We wish to give ourselves the right direction as people of God and as citizens of this country. The following pronouncements came after a careful and prudent considerations of the urgency of public health safety. This is a very difficult decision on our part. However, as pastors, it is also our solemn moral obligation to abide by the advisories of competent authorities in the name of common good and public safety. The Church in no way distances herself from her children, but on these extraordinary moments of our lives we shall invoke extraordinary means. May the following pronouncements guide and direct all of us who are desirous in halting the spread of the virus even as we desire to manifest our faith publicly.

1. Masses with the congregation (public masses) in the WHOLE ARCHDIOCESE are suspended starting March 20, 2020: THIS WILL REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL REVOKE BY ME. I enjoin all the pastors to **celebrate masses without a congregation** everyday and avail all other means and instrumentalities so that our faithful may be able to participate even virtually. Family prayers must also be emphasized: **“where two or three are gathered in my name I am in their midst” (Mt. XVII: 20).**

2. With regard to the fulfillment of Sunday obligations, I admonish the faithful that you attend livestream masses observing proper decorum in your houses. The law provides that in times of crisis and calamities leading to physical impossibility we can resort to some other prudent means. It is on this ground that we invoke the extraordinary means (lives-treaming the masses) so that you can faithfully fulfill the Sunday obligation. However, more importantly, when these means are not available, the family should pray together during Sunday.

3. Baptisms and Funeral Masses may be celebrated but the attendees must be limited to the immediate family; observing the required distance during the entire celebration.

4. Anointing of the sick must not be denied from those who seek for it. In dispensing the sacrament I admonish the pastors to strictly follow the indications of health professionals. Let us be dispensers of divine grace even as we also desire to become beacons of good health.

5. I admonish the pastors to regularly sanitize churches and chapels. It would be a great good for our faithful that we make the Church available for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and other private personal devotions. Prayer sustains the life of the Church especially in times of crisis.

6. The Lenten celebrations must go on. However, let us also make use of available means and other instrumentalities to livestream the celebrations. We understand that this is beyond normal but we cannot continue to participate when our health is compromised. Let our discomforts and pains of not being able to participate actively be our means to unite ourselves to the salvific pains of our Lord. Let us also avail of some Kerygmatic reflections on air during Good Friday celebrations.

My dear people of God the Church is not abandoning her children on these trying moments. We are availing the best means to reach out to you. We continuously seek the mercy and compassion of God and the maternal protection of our Lady. Let these words of the Lord be our source of strength and courage: “...**I do will it, BE CURED**”! (Lk. V: 13).

Given this 18th day of March in the year of our Lord 2020 at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center and Chancery, Palo, Leyte, Philippines.

With my paternal Blessings!


✠ MOST REV. JOHN F. DU, D.D.
Archbishop of Palo

