



Archdiocese of Palo

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

CIRCULAR

Ptcl. No. 004 s. 2020

Re: Precautions to be adapted during Liturgical celebrations and some indications on sacramentals

To: All the Clergy of the Archdiocese and the holy people of God in the Archdiocese

My Dear Brothers in the Ministry and my People of God!

Peace!

Just Recently the WHO has declared COVID-19 a Pandemic. The virus has reached far and wide. It continues to contaminate people all over the globe. Reports about deaths were even more alarming. We continue to pray the Oratio Imperata that God, in his goodness and mercy, may finally bend his protecting hand and stem the tide of this deadly virus. We also seek the intercession of the Saints and in very particular way the powerful maternal protection of our Lady. While we take serious precautionary measures in accordance with the indications of health experts, let us not forget that this predicament is a call to faith, hope and trust in God's providence.

We have to participate actively whatever measure possible, not only to appease troubled lives, but above all to eventually halt the spread of this virus. In view of the Lenten activities and other observances, I have decided to issue the following indications. Again this is in keeping with the measures delineated by health experts, to wit:

1. All parish churches and all other places where liturgical and para-liturgical activities are held must be properly sanitized pursuant to the processes enunciated by the DOH.

2. Holding of hands, shaking of hands and all other gestures suggesting physical contacts during liturgical celebrations are strongly discouraged.

3. Priests and EMHC who participate in distributing communion must take extra precautions (e.g. wearing of masks and sanitizing before and after distributing communion). Washing of hands is the most effective of means. However, in its absence priests must provide sanitizers or any other instrumentalities to the effect of protecting from contamination and being contaminated.

4. The use of Holy Water fonts is temporarily suspended. I admonish the priests to empty all fonts and all other containers intended for the use of same.

5. Prudence demands that we leave to the authorities and agencies mandated for authoritative informations. Let us refrain from sharing and spreading unqualified data relative to the spread of the virus. Fake news can be more deadly.

6. In the measure that this Pandemic is still inflicting communities, I strongly admonish that we distribute communion by the hand. We offer no choice for our faithful until the cessation of the same. This decision remains until revoke by me.

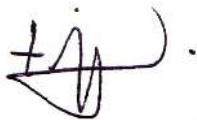
7. With regard to the veneration of the statues of Saints and in particular the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday, I strongly advise you to admonish our faithful to retrain from kissing and touching those articles. Genuflecting and / or making profound bow before the Cross and other images suffice as an expression of reverence and respect.

8. For the Lenten observance of Confessions (the Kumpisalan ng Bayan) I HAVE DECIDED TO ENVOKE THE USE OF GENERAL ABSOLUTION. I INDICATE THREE (ONLY 3) INSTANCES: 1. The last Sunday of Lent (all Masses), 2. Palm Sunday (all Masses) and 3. the Holy Thursday Mass. It is important that before these celebrations priests should have done catechesis on this regard. The indications and the Rite of Celebration are uploaded to our FB page. It is necessary to note that granting of the said absolution will only be on those three indicated days.

My dear brothers and people of God, I urge you to continue praying particularly in your homes and residences. Penances and voluntary mortifications are considered most effective means in calling on God's mercy and protection. The praying of the Holy Rosary is equally an important devotion to appeal to our Lady's maternal protection.

Again and again, let us maximize our strength as a community of believers in invoking God's protecting hand, even as we take extreme precautions recommended by authorities.

Given this 13th day of March in the year of our Lord 2020 at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center and Chancery, Palo, Leyte.



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

