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Indications of the Kenyan and Ugandan Conferences of Bishops

The Conferences of Catholic Bishops for Kenya and for Uganda have recently written to their faithful on measures to be taken in the liturgy during these days.

03/24/2020

Guidelines of the Kenya Conference
of Catholic Bishops of 23rd March
2020

Guidelines of the Kenya Conference
of Catholic Bishops of 14th March
2020

Guidelines of the Uganda Episcopal
Conference of 19th March 2020

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Your Eminence, Your Grace, Your
Lordship,

**GUIDELINES ON THE
PASTORAL ACTIVITIES IN
THE LIGHT OF THE SPREAD
OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
- 23 March 2020**

Greetings and best wishes from
KCCB.

Following the latest update by the
Ministry of Health on the increasing
cases of the Coronavirus in our
Country and further directives issued

on 22nd March 2020 by the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government on how to curb the spread of this virus, we as Catholic Bishops, wish to give some guidelines so as to ensure compliance in our Churches.

1. We urge you all to adhere strictly to the directives issued by the Ministry of Health. Moving forward, we shall be engaging the Government to involve the Church leaders before making some pronouncements so as to avoid issuance of directives that are gravely injurious to the Faith. 2. We suspend the public daily and Sunday Masses, and other liturgical and pastoral activities involving the gathering of the Faithful.

3. The Priests should all continue celebrating daily Mass privately without the Faithful for the

intentions of the Parishioners and the Nation.

4. We invite our Priests to be available to creatively accompany the individual Faithful pastorally, including the Anointing of the Sick, Communion outside the Mass, and other spiritual nourishment, while observing the social distance and high level of hygiene.

5. We ask the Priests to avail their contacts to their Parishioners so that they can be easily reached by those who are in need of the pastoral and spiritual care.

6. We urge our dear Faithful to read and reflect on the Word of God, offer individual prayers, recite the Holy Rosary, pray the Novenas and carry out other spiritual exercises in their respective homes.

7. We will all continue praying to God wherever we are to bring to an end

this Coronavirus pandemic and the current sufferings of the people.

8. We urge all Christians to use this time of restriction in their homes to strengthen their family ties by sharing moments and planning together their programs, projects and other common ventures, while observing the social distance guide.

We, in our individual capacity as Local Ordinaries, are invited to guide the Priests and the Faithful on how best to implement these guidelines in the light of the restrictions given by the National and County Governments.

Finally, we as your Shepherds will continue to keep you in our prayers as we seek the divine intervention to end this pandemic which is threatening the lives of the people in the whole world. As Christians, let us all intensify our prayers and put our hope and trust in God who is able to

heal and protect us from all the diseases.

We ask our Mother Mary and the Saints to intercede for us all at this difficult moment our lives. Yours Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Philip Anyolo

Chairman of Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops

Cc. Most Rev. Bert Van Megen

Apostolic Nuncio KENYA
CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC
BISHOPS

23rd March 2020

[Download PDF of the Pastoral
Guidelines on Coronavirus](#)

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GUIDELINES OF THE KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS - 14th March 2020

14th March 2020

Your Eminence, Your Graces, Your
Lordships,

PREPAREDNESS FOR CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Receive Lenten greetings and best
wishes from KCCB - General
Secretariat.

We are all aware of the great threat
of the Coronavirus (Covid 19)
pandemic that has recently spread
across the entire world. So far, this
disease has caused over 4,600 deaths
the world over. With one case
confirmed in Kenya, we ought to be
in a state of preparedness, so that
further spread of the infection may
be easily contained. Following the

indications already given by the experts, this virus is mainly spread through contact of droplets of mucus, through the mouth, eyes and nose.

We, the Catholic Bishops, wish to give some guidance so that our liturgical celebrations and other related gatherings do not facilitate any incidental spread of the Coronavirus as follows:

1. We strongly exhort the Priests to observe the highest level of hygiene in the liturgical ceremonies.

Specifically, we ask them to thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water before any liturgical celebration, and to use soap in the lavabo rite of the Mass to ensure total cleanliness as they come in contact with the bread and wine.

2. In giving Holy Communion to the sick, the Priests should also observe high level of hygiene, of washing of hands before and after the Holy

Communion or Anointing of the Sick, to avoid any infection to the sick or from the sick.

3. Similar strict measures should be followed especially before carrying out any assistance on the Altar by the servers and any extraordinary minister who comes in contact with the liturgical items or Eucharistic species.

4. For the time being, we may be constrained to remove temporarily the Holy Water from the water fonts. However, Christians may carry Holy Water for use in the homes, and even for personal use as they pray.

5. Although we recognize the importance of the hand greetings in our culture, in view of the risk posed by handshakes, we request that, while this threat is still real, we advise the Christians to wave to one another during the exchange of

peace in the daily celebrations of Mass.

6. We encourage any person who suffers from a cold to voluntarily abstain from the Holy Mass celebrations until they recover.

7. We recognize the desire of many Christians to receive the Eucharist with utmost piety, often on the mouth. In the current circumstances, and weighing the eventual risks, we request that the Faithful receive the Eucharist on the hand with due reverence. This will continue until the threat of the virus is abated.

8. We also urge all the Christian; to follow the indications of prevention of spread of the virus, as we have been given by the health authorities of the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization. Firstly, we appeal to you to observe the highest level of hygiene, by washing your hands with soap as often as possible.

We encourage wherever possible to provide Sanitizers in strategic places, in our Church areas, our meeting halls and Parish offices, for use by our Faithful. Secondly, we appeal to you to be open to reduce our shaking of hands, even though we know this could seem to mean a loss of warmth in our relations, but charity now dictates that we care more to prevent our sisters and brothers from any danger of infection. Thirdly, we appeal to you to cover your mouths and nose when you cough or sneeze, even when alone, to avoid infecting surfaces or items we use.

9. Common good dictates that should anyone suffer a flu, that they go to the health facilities to monitor and be able to catch any incidental infection on time.

10. As we recognize the imminent danger of this pandemic, we, however, request that we avoid any

tendencies or attitudes of discrimination and stigmatization of the affected persons.

Our dear Christians, we know that some of these measures will interrupt our liturgy sensitivity, and our customs as Catholics, but it is necessary to take them, given the high risk our hesitation may expose us all.

Finally, we invite all Christians to pray for the end of this pandemic. We ask that we raise prayers to God through the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and through Novenas to the various patron Saints. We believe Our Lord will hear our prayers and save our Nation and our world from this menace.

Signed for and on behalf of the
Chairman,

Very Rev. Fr. Daniel K. Rono

General Secretary of KCCB

For: Most Rev. Philip Anyolo

CHAIRMAN OF KCCB

GUIDELINES OF THE UGANDA EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE - 19th March 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you already know, the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, outbreak that started in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, has spread to many countries, including some in East Africa. The virus is infectious, meaning it can spread directly or indirectly from one person to another. Its spread is through the mucosal membranes of the nose, mouth and eyes, then spreading

down to the throat, airways and lungs. The virus may contaminate the hand when one touches any surface already contaminated by the virus. The Coronavirus can survive up to 8-10 hours on porous surfaces such as paper, untreated wood, cardboard, sponge, and fabric, and a little longer on non-porous surfaces such as glass, plastic, metal, and varnished wood.

We are cognizant of the fact that the virus is spread essentially through droplets which may come out of the nose or mouth and enter the mouth, nose or eyes of other people who are close to the infected person. Because of this, the virus is easily spread.

Globally, as of today, there are about 200,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus with more than 8,000 deaths. More than one hundred forty (140) countries are already affected. In Africa, cases have been confirmed

in 28 countries, including Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini [Swaziland], Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, and United Republic of Tanzania.

The mortality from coronavirus is reported to be as low as 2-3%. But due to the rapid spread, this rate can rise. Currently, there is no antiviral drug that is confirmed to directly act against COVID-19. Moreover the supportive treatment in our facilities may not be as good as in developed countries, especially where Intensive Care Unit (ICU) may be required for severe infections.

The Ministry of Health has provided guidance on how to prevent infection

and spread of the virus. It has also given the "COVID-19 Guidelines on Safe Mass Gatherings". The country is also guided on 16 countries which should consider postponing non-essential travels to Uganda, namely, China, South Korea, Italy, San Marino, Iran, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, USA, United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Austria and Malaysia. Similarly any person, including Ugandans, arriving in Uganda from those countries will have to undergo self-quarantine for 14 days at own cost even if they do not exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

The President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, has reaffirmed the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and issued further orders to strengthen them. They include ban on religious gatherings such as prayers in churches, mosques, open

air, and services on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. This takes immediate effect. He has also directed all schools, tertiary institutions and universities [including our Seminaries], to close by mid-day 20th March 2020. The ban will remain in effect for 32 days from 18th March, 2020.

In light of the above, we the Catholic Bishops of Uganda (Uganda Episcopal Conference), aware of our duty and obligation to safeguard the health of the faithful, embrace the guidelines issued by the Government of Uganda.

Accordingly, we provide the following guidance to our flock involved in any liturgical and other spiritual activities:

1. Bishops and all the clergy should make the directives from the President and the guidelines from Ministry of Health widely available to the

faithful. This can be done during homilies, distributing printed copies of the Guidelines, and using local Catholic radios and any other media.

2. We advise the Priests, Catechists, extraordinary ministers for Holy Communion, and Altar Servers to thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water before and after liturgical celebrations.
3. Where possible, provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers or hand washing facilities with soap at the entrance of the Church for all in-coming members of the church to wash before entering the church and at exit. The recommended sanitizer should have *above* 60% alcohol, although higher concentration of up to 80% is preferred.

4. Ensure that all Holy Water fonts at the entrance of some churches remain empty.
5. Church buildings should have windows open during celebrations to allow adequate light and aeration.
6. Suspend all handshakes and hugs during Holy Mass and other liturgical celebrations until the pandemic is *over*.
7. Holy Communion should be given in the hands of the faithful.
8. Ministers should thoroughly wash hands with sanitizers before and after distribution of Holy Communion.
9. Where concelebration takes place, concelebrants [clergy] should communicate by intinction and only the main celebrant or any other priest should consume the Precious Blood of Christ last.

10. Care and prudence be observed in administering Sacraments and Sacramentals.
11. All persons, clergy and laity, who may have symptoms of flu and cough should avoid going to public gatherings, including the Holy Mass, and have themselves checked promptly. We encourage the faithful to quickly enable such persons to reach the nearest health facility as quickly and safely as possible. Such persons should, however, not be discriminated against or stigmatized but treated with dignity and love of Christ (Mt 25:36ff).
12. Since public gatherings are banned, we urge our clergy, religious, catechists, and laity to refrain from conducting the Stations of the Cross, crusades, workshops and retreats of more than 10 people. Furthermore, they are instructed to limit

funeral rites to close relatives, administration of the sacrament of Matrimony, for those who cannot wait, to no more than 10 people, with celebrations postponed to a later date (after expiry of the 32 - day moratorium). Such gatherings encourage close contact which may facilitate infections from one person to another.

13. We dispense the faithful from the Sunday obligation to participate in the Holy Mass during this period; however, we encourage all Catholic radio stations to relay and broadcast Holy Mass on Sundays and week days. The faithful are advised to tune in at given times which are to be announced by the same radio stations. The faithful are also strongly encouraged to pray at their homes.

14. Further guidance will be provided for the Holy Week celebrations; Holy Thursday, Chrism Mass, Holy Friday and Holy Saturday (Triduum).
15. Avoid spreading unsubstantiated information or rumours. Always cross-check any information about Coronavirus and other diseases with health experts, Ministry of Health, and the website of World Health Organization (WHO).
16. We greatly appreciate the sacrifice and commitment made by health workers and we want to assure them of our constant prayer and encouragement. We appeal to all the faithful to do the same.

We entrust our country to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Martyrs of Uganda. We pray that the pandemic does not

affect more people. In a special way, we condole with the families and relatives of those who have lost their loved ones to the disease, and ask the Almighty God to grant recovery to the sick and quick solution to the pandemic.

During this Lenten Season, let us intensify our prayers, fasting, and works of charity asking God to grant us his mercy and love. In addition to the prayer of Pope Francis, we invite the Faithful to recite at least one of the Rosary every day praying for the end of the Pandemic.

Yours in Christ our Saviour,

Rt. Rev Joseph Antony Zziwa

Chairman of Uganda Episcopal
Conference and Bishop of Kiyinda-
Mityana Diocese

*19th March 2020 (the Feast day of
Saint Joseph)*

At UGANDA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT
- NSAMBYA - KAMPALA

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