

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

1. CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC: AN URGENT CALL TO ACTION

I had issued two circulars (dated 19 and 25 March 2020) regarding the pandemic of coronavirus with guidelines how to go about with genuine concern, responsibility and action. I hereby extend the exemption given to the Catholic faithful from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until the lockdown ends in our country. I request each one of you first to take adequate means and measures to keep yourself safe and healthy and at the same time think of those who are / will be in need of our care and services. Please follow strictly the measures stipulated by the Central/State Governments and Local Authorities to contain the spread of this deadly virus and advise your parishioners to do the same. Due to the nationwide lockdown, those who have been / will be truly affected are the daily labourers, weaker sections of our society, the poor, the needy and the elderly and hence not only our hearts should go out for them but our concern demonstrated in action. Therefore, I hereby invite Parish Priests to devise ways and means to reach out / respond to the needs of the vulnerable people through the *Gurkars* and Ward representatives no matter from which faith and family

background they belong and are within your respective parish jurisdiction, so that volunteers from the respective Wards / Parish are able to help the needy with medicine, food and emergency help. While doing so, let them strictly follow the guidelines issued by the Local Authorities; it would be better if this is undertaken with their knowledge and permission as well. Since money is involved, please motivate your financially viable parishioners to be generous and if necessary, you may use a part of the church fund if available to be set aside for this purpose with prior information to your PFC members. Let us increase our prayers and raise our hearts to God so that His mercy may be upon us all. The Apostolic Penitentiary has issued a decree granting special indulgence to the faithful in the current pandemic and the same is given as annexure 2. Please inform about the same to your parishioners for their spiritual benefit. Please keep in touch with your parishioners with the means of communication available, encouraging them with overtones of the Word of God and to spend time in family prayer. Time has now come to put into action Matt. 25: 34-46 more than ever before. May God bless us all and protect us.

2. SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

In the present situation it is not advisable to hear individual confessions. The conditions given in Canon 962#2 for General Absolution may be applied for those suffering from the coronavirus infection. However, it will not be possible to get them together for an Absolution without individual confession. Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered

that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by *votum confessionis*, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. CCC, no. 1452).

3. SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

If you get a sick call in case of danger of death, please avoid any physical contact with the patient. Physical contact is extremely dangerous in case of Coronavirus infection. So no anointing with the Oil of the Sick. Lead the patient to have perfect contrition. If he/she is able to, encourage him/her to recall offences against God. Speak of God's goodness, love and mercy and motivate the patient to feel sorrow for sins. Then you may verbalise a prayer asking for God's forgiveness. The patient could join you interiorly or repeat it after you if he/she is strong enough to do so.

4. HOLY WEEK CELEBRATIONS

The Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments has issued two decrees on 19th and 25th March 2020, in view of the prevailing situation of the corona pandemic, regarding the community celebration of the Liturgy during the Holy Week. Accordingly, based on these documents and keeping in mind the situation in our Diocese, I have issued guidelines for the celebration of the Holy Week in the parishes of Udipi Diocese. Please find the same as Annexure 1. The Decree issued on 25 March 2020 is also

given for your reference. Although most of the celebrations will be in private, without the participation of the faithful, let us celebrate them meaningfully for the sanctification of ourselves and our parishioners and pray for God's mercy for our redemption from the corona virus soon.

5. EASTER

After 40 days of Lenten prayer, fasting, penance and almsgiving, the Holy Mother the Church invites us to rejoice at the solemnity of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The feast of Easter is the culmination of the season of Lent and particularly the Holy Week. This year it falls on 12 April 2020. Although we are not able to celebrate the Holy Week and Easter as a community this year, the message of Easter stands very relevant in the present context of the world which is facing inexplicable pain, misery and suffering due to the spread of the corona virus. Though all of us are facing hardships during these times, our faith in the resurrection of Christ invites us to look forward with hope and confidence. May the risen Christ fill us with hope and joy as he did for his two disciples on their way to Emmaus. I wish you, all, a happy Easter. Please extend my Easter wishes to your dear parishioners and members of your religious communities. Let us remember and remind the faithful to pray 'Queen of Heaven' (*Regina Caeli*) at angelus during the season of Easter.

6. DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

The Church celebrates the Second Sunday of Easter as the Divine Mercy Sunday which falls on 19th April this year. This feast is based on the Catholic devotion to the

Divine Mercy that Saint Faustina Kowalska reported as per her encounter with Jesus and is associated with special promises to her from Jesus. If the situation permits, I wish that all parishes celebrate this day with the devotion associated with the day, such as Divine Mercy Chaplet (Rosary), Prayers to St Faustina and Litany of Divine Mercy, and also encourage the faithful's devotion to Divine Mercy.

7. PROGRAMMES IN APRIL 2020

Since lockdown has been announced in our country for 21 days, all scheduled programmes/meetings like pastoral visits, ordinations, etc. till the end of April 2020 stand cancelled. After observing the situation, I request you to kindly have these programmes rescheduled, in consultation with me. All offices in the Bishop's House will not be open until the lockdown ends. You may contact me over the phone for any urgent communication.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ 

+ Gerald Isaac Lobo
Bishop of Udupi

OBITUARY

Mrs Ephrogine Monteiro (85 yrs), M/o Rev. Jerome Monteiro, Parish Priest, Pernal, passed away on 5 February 2020. May her soul rest in peace.

SILVER JUBILEE OF ORDINATION

Rev. Fr Harold Pereira, Director, SCC and Commission for Ecumenism & Rev. Fr Paul Rego, Parish Priest, Miyar celebrate their Silver Jubilee of Ordination on 25 April 2020. We congratulate them and convey our best wishes.

CONGREGAZIONE PER IL CULTO DIVINO E LA DISCIPLINA DEI SACRAMENTI

Prot. N. 154/20

DECREE

In time of Covid-19 (II)

Considering the rapidly evolving situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and taking into account observations which have come from Episcopal Conferences, this Congregation now offers an update to the general indications and suggestions already given to Bishops in the preceding decree of 19 March 2020.

Given that the date of Easter cannot be transferred, in the countries which have been struck by the disease and where restrictions around the assembly and movement of people have been imposed, Bishops and priests may celebrate the rites of Holy Week without the presence of the people and in a suitable place, avoiding concelebration and omitting the sign of peace.

The faithful should be informed of the beginning times of the celebrations so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes. Means of live (not recorded) telematic broadcasts can be of help. In any event it remains important to dedicate an adequate time to prayer, giving importance above all to the *Liturgia Horarum*.

The Episcopal Conferences and individual dioceses will see to it that resources are provided to support family and personal prayer.

1. **Palm Sunday.** The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem is to be celebrated within sacred

buildings; in Cathedral churches the second form given in the Roman Missal is to be adopted; in parish churches and in other places the third form is to be used.

2. **The Chrism Mass.** Evaluating the concrete situation in different countries, the Episcopal Conferences will be able to give indications about a possible transfer to another date.

3. **Holy Thursday.** The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper the procession is also omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. On this day the faculty to celebrate Mass in a suitable place, without the presence of the people, is exceptionally granted to all priests.

4. **Good Friday.** In the Universal Prayer, Bishops will arrange to have a special intention prepared for those who find themselves in distress, the sick, the dead, (cf. *Missale Romanum*). The adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited solely to the celebrant.

5 – **The Easter Vigil:** Is to be celebrated only in Cathedral and parish churches. For the “Baptismal Liturgy” only the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” is maintained (cf. *Missale Romanum*).

Seminaries, houses of clergy, monasteries and religious communities shall follow the indications of this decree.

Expressions of popular piety and processions which enrich the days of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum can be transferred to other suitable days in the year, for example 14 and 15 September, according to the judgement of the Diocesan Bishop.

De mandato Summi Pontificis pro hoc tantum anno 2020.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 25 March 2020, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

✠ Arthur Roche
Archbishop Secretary

DECREE OF THE APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY ON THE GRANTING OF SPECIAL INDULGENCES TO THE FAITHFUL IN THE CURRENT PANDEMIC

The gift of special Indulgences is granted to the faithful suffering from COVID-19 disease, commonly known as Coronavirus, as well as to health care workers, family members and all those who in any capacity, including through prayer, care for them.

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (*Rom 12: 12*). The words written by Saint Paul to the Church of Rome resonate throughout the entire history of the Church and guide the judgment of the faithful in the face of all suffering, sickness and calamity.

The present moment in which the whole of humanity, threatened by an invisible and insidious disease, which for some time now has become part of all our lives, is marked day after day by anguished fears, new uncertainties and above all widespread physical and moral suffering.

The Church, following the example of her Divine Master, has always had the care of the sick at heart. As Saint John Paul II points out, the value of human suffering is twofold: “It is supernatural because it is rooted in the divine mystery of the Redemption of the world, and it is likewise deeply human, because in it the person discovers himself, his own humanity, his own dignity, his own mission” (Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris*, 31).

Pope Francis, too, in these recent days, has shown his paternal closeness and renewed his invitation to pray incessantly for those who are sick with the Coronavirus.

So that all those who suffer because of COVID-19, precisely in the mystery of this suffering, may rediscover “the same redemptive suffering of Christ” (*ibid.*, 30), this Apostolic Penitentiary, *ex auctoritate Summi Pontificis*, trusting in the word of Christ the Lord and considering with a spirit of faith the epidemic currently underway, to be lived in a spirit of personal conversion, grants the gift of Indulgences in accordance with the following disposition.

The *Plenary Indulgence* is granted to the faithful suffering from Corona virus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfil the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible.

Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus according to the words of the divine Redeemer: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends” (*Jn 15: 13*), will obtain the same gift of the *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions.

This Apostolic Penitentiary also willingly grants a *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions on the occasion of the current world epidemic, also to those faithful who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation

of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.

The Church prays for those who find themselves unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the *Viaticum*, entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a *Plenary Indulgence* on the point of death, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended (cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum*, no. 12).

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of the Church, Health of the Sick and Help of Christians, our Advocate, help suffering humanity, saving us from the evil of this pandemic and obtaining for us every good necessary for our salvation and sanctification.

The present Decree is valid notwithstanding any provision to the contrary.

Given in Rome, from the seat of the Apostolic Penitentiary, on 19 March 2020.

Mauro Cardinal Piacenza

Major Penitentiary

Krzysztof Nykiel

Regent

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