



ZAMBIA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS (Z.C.C.B)

CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

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Memo

To: The Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful

Cc: *Local Ordinaries, Vicars General, Bishops' Secretaries & Pastoral Coordinators*

From: The President – ZCCB

Date: 28th March 2020

Re: **Additional Measures Taken in order to Avert the Spread of Coronavirus**

Your Graces, My Lord Bishops, the Clergy, Consecrated Men and Women, and our esteemed lay faithful.

On behalf of the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), I write to announce some additional measures we have put in place in a bid to avert the spread of COVID-19 through Church gatherings and activities. Thus, in an effort to address the serious threat posed by the Coronavirus Outbreak, and in the wake of rising numbers of confirmed cases in Zambia, **be informed that all public Church gatherings, communal liturgical celebrations, including the liturgies of the Holy Week, have been cancelled or suspended in accordance with the guidelines given by the Holy See. This is to be observed for the initial period of 21 days, effective Monday, 30th March 2020.** In addition to the health and pastoral guidelines earlier issued by the Bishops' Conference and individual Local Ordinaries, we wish to call upon the clergy and the entire membership of the Catholic Church in Zambia to strictly adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1) *That all Catholics must endeavour to strictly follow the health guidelines being given by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the World Health Organisation (WHO);*
- 2) *That **ALL** Church gatherings as well as communal liturgical and para-liturgical celebrations are suspended or cancelled for the initial period of 21 days with effect from Monday, 30th March, 2020;*



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- 3) *That all members of the clergy, religious and lay volunteers returning to Zambia from foreign countries must ensure that they are medically screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and that even when they are cleared at their designated point of entry, they **SHOULD** immediately enter into **VOLUNTARY SELF-QUARANTINE** for the initial period of 14 days;*
- 4) *That all Catholic Health Facilities must make adequate preparations for any eventualities as well as train and equip their medical staff accordingly. In the meantime, they should continue to sensitise the public and create awareness on facts about COVID-19;*
- 5) *That the ZCCB Communications Department, working in close collaboration with the Pastoral Departments/Offices and Catholic Media Houses at both national and archdiocesan/diocesan levels, must not only continue disseminating information regarding the Coronavirus Disease but **MUST** also prepare some pastoral resources to be aired through radio, television and social media platforms. These must include but may not be limited to biblical reflections, recorded daily masses and Lenten or Holy Week Devotions as well as streamed liturgical celebrations without or with limited assembly (of between 2 and 5 people);*
- 6) *That we urge the clergy to continue offering their pastoral ministry using the innovations available in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as well as offer sacramental services in line with the guidelines issued by the Holy See in the wake of the Coronavirus Pandemic. In the event that priests are called upon to anoint the sick who are in danger of death, they must seek medical advice from competent health professionals and ensure that they protect themselves and others by using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as certified clothing, masks and gloves;*
- 7) *That all Church institutions must suspend or at least downsize their operations. As such, all non-essential pastoral and social programmes and activities must be suspended or postponed until further notice.*

In addition, I wish to convey our sincere apologies to you all for any inconvenience that will be caused by implementing the above-mentioned measures. I sincerely thank you in anticipation of your kind understanding and your usual cooperation.



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In the meantime, continue to follow the basic rules of hygiene, especially those of washing your hands with soap regularly and thoroughly; avoiding physical greeting and contact; observing social distancing of more than 1 metre from others; avoiding to touch your eyes, nose and mouth; covering your mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing; avoiding to spit in public and attending public gatherings or events. Once more, let us unite in prayer, even when we are practically not able to meet as a liturgical assembly in our Lay Organisation, Section, Small Christian Community (SCC), Out-Station or Parish.

Let us give heed to the exhortation of St. Paul when he writes: *“Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith” (Galatians 6:9-10).* In addition, the same apostle exhorts us: *“We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good [both] for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:14-22).* Lastly, we urge every Catholic to persevere in prayer. Indeed, *“With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones” (Ephesians 6:18).*

With the pledge of our pastoral closeness and joint prayers for the victims of COVID-19, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

Rt. Rev. George Cosmas Zumaire Lungu
Bishop of Chipata
ZCCB PRESIDENT

