

# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KITUI



From the Archbishops Desk

My dear Christians,

My Dear daughters and Sons,

“The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want...

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” (Psalm 23)

The alert levels of the Corona Virus Pandemic have been raised. The Government has given further directives on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020. These imply a total Lockdown of the highest level, including the total ban of any sort of gathering. That means, although we have the desire to continue offering our prayers for our Nation, for the Sick, and for the end of the Corona Virus, within our Churches observing the social space indication, we must now change our place of prayer to our homes for the sake of our families and for the sake of our sisters and brothers in Kenya.

I would therefore wish to give the following indications, on how we shall continue being united as a praying community, and united in the sacrifice of the mass.

1. We will not gather in our Churches for Mass or any Liturgical celebration, either on Sunday or on the weekdays. As already indicated we shall also not have “Jumuia”, Small Christian Community meetings until further notice.
2. We must insist that the situation of the Corona Virus is very serious; It is now a matter of how to prevent a huge loss of life in Kenya. It is therefore totally necessary that everyone stay at Home, and that we follow all the indications given by the Government on hygiene, no handshakes, keeping social distance around us, and not gathering at all. I especially ask the elderly, over 65 years, not to leave their homes, and that we defend them by avoiding any visits.
3. The Archbishop, using the powers given to him, has given a dispensation for Sunday Mass, and so we should not have any weight in conscience for not attending the Sunday Mass as a gathered community.
4. The priests will continue celebrating Mass in the Main Parish Churches for the Intentions of the People, and the intentions of our Nation. In order to help the Christians unite themselves with the Holy Mass, we will ring the bells as Mass is starting, whether during the weekday or on Sunday. Wherever possible, the priests will plan to record the Masses, or stream them through the social media platforms, or have them broadcasted through our radio, for the benefit of the parishioners. I suggest that each parish opens a Facebook page to assist in this, and give indications to the

Christians with phones or other gadgets on how to link to the mass. I suggest that the priests give a short five-minute reflection, for the benefit of the people of God. Our Radios should broadcast all these ceremonies, and further give times for the Holy Rosary and other devotions.

5. I also suggest that the priests organize at the parish a daily adoration in our Churches, and stream this adoration through the same social media. For the benefit of better participation, I allow the use a Music player to play the adoration songs and any other songs within the adoration time. However, it is better that there be long moments of silent prayer.
6. Our Communication teams will also produce clips to encourage us and post these in the YouTube and send them also by WhatsApp. It is therefore useful to gather the phone numbers of all the Christians in the parishes so as to facilitate the sending of the clips.
7. On my part as your Shepherd, I will try to send several clips, and voice reflections during this time, from wherever I will be. I will continue to pray for all of you, and together, though separated now by distances, we will live the communion of the Saints from our homes.
8. Our Churches will not close for the services to the individual Christians. You may individually seek the sacrament of communion from the priests from time to time. Given the risk of contagion, we suggest that the Sacrament of confession be celebrated only in the open and with a distance of more than a meter, with both wearing a mask. Please let us avoid travelling in public transport, including Boda Boda for the time being. The advice now is that we Stay at home for the next two weeks.
9. Let us use this time of restriction in our homes, to grow in family life, sharing moments and planning how to do small projects within our homes. I especially encourage our young people to keep busy and discover ways of helping their brothers and sisters, and their parents. Let us keep optimistic and joyful even in these circumstances, which is our special Lent sacrifice that the Lord asks of us.

My dear Christians, this is a difficult time for all of us, and most probably we have a tougher time ahead. Let us prepare ourselves through prayer to be of help to our sisters and brothers as we enter the more critical stage of the Pandemic. Prayer can truly shorten this time of trial. We know Our God can perform the big miracle we need and not suffer the loss of lives in our country.

We trust that our Lord will protect us and heal all who may get infected, while we on our part do whatever is possible, including great sacrifices in order to keep the infection at bay. We ask our Blessed Mother, Help of the Sick and Our Protection, to be with us on every step and minute, in these moments.

Your loving Shepherd,



✠ Anthony Muheria  
Archbishop Administrator of Kitui

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, Monday in Fourth week of Lent.

