



Rt Rev. S. Antony Samy D.D., D.C.L.,
Bishop of Palayamkottai

Catholic Bishop's House

1331-W, John Paul Nagar
K.T.C. Nagar,
Maharaja Nagar (Post)
Tirunelveli - 627 011
Tamil Nadu
INDIA
(Courier Address)

Post Box No. 108
Palayamkottai - 627 002
Tamil Nadu
INDIA
(Postal Address)

March 28, 2020

Dear Fathers, Religious, and Lay Faithful,

Greetings in the precious name of Jesus, the Crucified Messiah!

Considering the decrees issued by the Congregation for the Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on 19th and 25th March 2020, the recommendations given by the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) on 27th March, and directives by the Tamil Nadu Bishops Council (TNBC) on 25th March 2020, and also respecting the regulations given by the Civil Authorities for the society in today's context of COVID-19 pandemic, I am issuing the following guidelines for the celebration of the Holy Week in our diocese of Palayamkottai.

1. All the celebrations are to be restricted only to the Cathedral Church and the Parish Churches without the physical presence of the faithful and avoiding con-celebration.
2. Where the means of live (not recorded) televisual or internet broadcasts are available in the parish for the faithful, the latter should be informed of the times of the celebration so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their home.
3. All others are encouraged to participate spiritually in the Liturgy celebrated and telecast LIVE in Madha TV. Kindly follow the Liturgical Timing of the Madha TV.
4. The Parish Priest alone or the Priest in-charge of a Church alone celebrates the liturgy along with the Sacristan (to assist at the Mass) and a liturgical singer (to accompany at the relevant place in the Liturgy). The number of those present should not exceed THREE as per Section 144 of CrPC of 1973.
5. Priests are reminded once again as per the norms of the Liturgy of the Hours that those who are unable to celebrate / attend the respective Liturgical Ceremonies are to pray the Liturgy of the Hours (Cf. Evening Prayer of Good Friday and Office of Readings of Easter Sunday).
6. **Palm Sunday (April 05, 2020):**
 - a) In **Cathedral Church** the second form given in the Roman Missal (p. 274 in Tamil Missal) is to be followed, while in the **Parish Churches** and in other places the third form is to be used (found in the same page of the Tamil Missal).
 - b) The 'rachis' (the stalk) of the palm/coconut leaves carried by the Celebrant is blessed and will be reserved for preparing ash for Ash Wednesday 2021.



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7. **Chrism Mass (April 06, 2020):**

Priests' Sanctification Day and Chrism Mass are deferred to later convenient date that will be announced in due course of time.

8. **Maundy Thursday (April 09, 2020):**

- The Holy Eucharist of Lord's Supper is celebrated in the evening without the washing of Feet which is already optional.
- The procession at the end of the Mass is omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the Tabernacle.
- Priests are given special faculty this year to celebrate private Mass on this day.

9. **Good Friday (April 10, 2020):**

- In the Universal Prayer a special intention for the sick, the dead, for those who feel lost or dismayed especially in the context of Corona Virus is to be added.
- The adoration of the Cross by kissing is limited solely to the Celebrant.

10. **Easter Vigil (April 11, 2020):**

- The "Solemn beginning of the vigil or *Lucernarium*" preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted.
- The Paschal Candle is blessed and the procession is omitted. The Easter Proclamation (*Exultet*) is sung.
- For the 'Baptismal Liturgy' only the "Renewal of the Baptismal Promises" is maintained. Blessing of the Baptismal Font and Water are omitted.

May I exhort all of you to adhere to the above provisions for the celebration of Holy Week for the year 2020 only. Let our personal celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord, while increasing our personal sanctity, bring mercy, forgiveness, joy and peace to the faithful who are entrusted to our pastoral care.

Remaining fraternally united to you in spirit and in prayers during these holy days, I request your prayers for me

Yours devotedly in Our Lord,

+ S. Antony Sany

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