

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES
National Office

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TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

We, the Council of Bishops of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, meet at a very sad time when our country is now under a state of public health emergency with the Department of Health raising the COVID-19 alert level to Code Red sub-level one. But while the dreaded corona virus remains a serious public health problem, it can not inhibit our worship life and services nor incapacitate us from proceeding with our celebrations, meetings and other communal activities. However, it is important that we must cooperate with our health authorities and do our part in controlling and eliminating the spread of the virus. We therefore issue these special protocols, adopted from the Church of England Advisory, for strict implementation in our services and gatherings during the pendency of the emergency:

- 1] Priests presiding at the Eucharist, communion administrators and servers should wash their hands, preferably with an alcohol-based (minimum 60%) hand-sanitiser or 70% isopropyl alcohol.
- 2] Let us offer Communion to all our communicants in one kind only, i.e., the consecrated bread with the priest alone taking the wine.
- 3] Let us avoid handshaking or other direct physical contact during the sharing of peace. Instead let us give each other a simple bow or with the palm of our hands momentarily pressed together in a prayer-like gesture pointing upwards.
- 4] When giving the blessing or laying on of hands, the priest should hold his/her hands over the head of our people receiving such blessing with no physical contact.
- 5] For the veneration of the cross on Holy Week, let us suspend kissing the cross and instead doing a simple bow before it. Similarly, let us suspend

ECP VISION 2028: "A CHURCH OF SCRIPTURE-ROOTED, SPIRIT-FIRED AND DISCIPLED PARISHES."

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washing of the feet and other practices which involve direct physical contact.

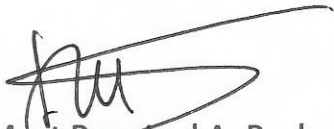
6] Best hygiene practice should be observed in all pastoral contacts.

Our very own Health Enhancers and Advocates for the Lord (HEAL) has directed us to call on the public to practice universal precautionary measures to prevent further spread of the disease or being infected with the disease by doing the following measures:

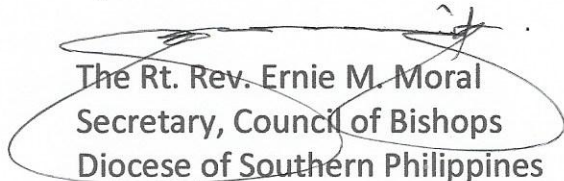
1. Practice proper cough etiquette. Cover your mouth and nose with handkerchief or tissue or your bent elbow (not into your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Throw tissue immediately on the trash can.
2. Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based disinfectant.
3. Maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
5. Stay at home when you are sick. If you have fever, cough and difficulty of breathing, go to your nearest health center or doctor immediately.
6. If you are sick, avoid sharing eating utensils, towels, bedding or other personal belongings with other people in your home.
7. Follow directions of local health authority especially if you have history of travel to areas with Corona Virus or have exposure to cases positive for the virus.
8. Wearing of mask is only advised for those who are sick or when taking care of sick people.
9. Avoid crowded places. If inevitable, practice proper cough manners and handwashing and use of disinfectant.
10. Maintain other healthy lifestyle habits like eating a balanced diet, physical activity, getting enough rest and sleep to strengthen your resistance to diseases.
11. If you have history of travel within the past two weeks and develop symptoms of cough, fever and difficulty of breathing, seek medical care immediately.
12. Drink plenty of water and cook your food especially meat thoroughly.

At this time we need to continue strengthening our care for each other and for ourselves as we pray for recovery and good health for all those affected and threatened as well as for continuing guidance and strength for those who minister to them.

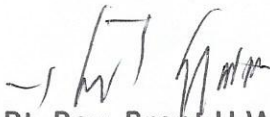
Amen.



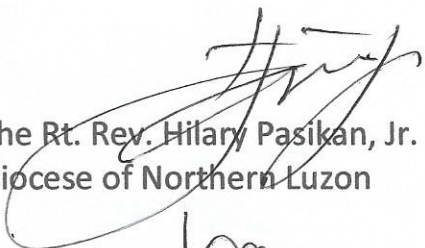
The Most Rev. Joel A. Pachao
Prime Bishop and Chair, Council
of Bishops



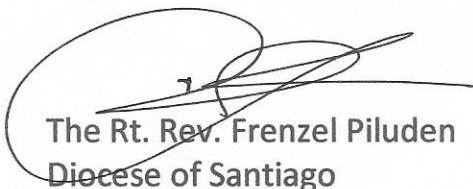
The Rt. Rev. Ernie M. Moral
Secretary, Council of Bishops
Diocese of Southern Philippines



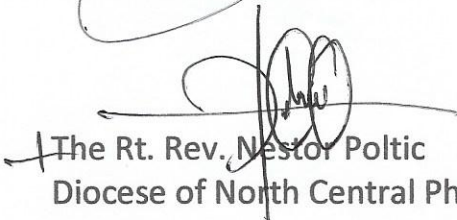
The Rt. Rev. Brent H.W. Alawas
Diocese of Northern Philippines



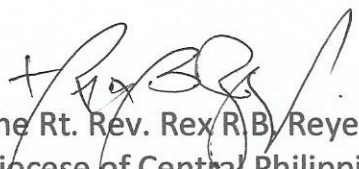
The Rt. Rev. Hilary Pasikan, Jr.
Diocese of Northern Luzon



The Rt. Rev. Frenzel Piluden
Diocese of Santiago



The Rt. Rev. Nestor Poltic
Diocese of North Central Philippines



The Rt. Rev. Rex R. B. Reyes, Jr.
Diocese of Central Philippines

11 March 2020