

Comunicado Arquidiócesis de Manila respecto de celebraciones religiosas en Semana Santa por pandemia del COVID-19

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An appeal for more fervent prayers

Your Eminences, Archbishops and Bishops and Diocesan Administrators:

Peace!

In the past few days, we saw the very alarming rise of COVID-19 infections in the country, especially in the NCR and surrounding provinces. Last Friday, 26 March 2021, a new record high of a single-day tally of 9,838 COVID-19 infections was reported. This is really very alarming, to say the least.

Recently, because of this situation, the IATF issued Resolution No. 104 dated 20 March 2021, which directed, among others, that mass gatherings, including religious gatherings, shall be prohibited in the areas of the NCR, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal, from March 22 to April 4 this year. But hearing our concern that our celebrations of Holy Week and Easter, especially our opening of our commemoration of the 500 Years of Christianity (YOC) in the Philippines, are affected by this directive, the IATF reconsidered this situation and issued the IATF Resolution No. 105 dated 25 March 2021, stating among others, that religious denominations may hold religious gatherings once-a-day for the celebration of their respective worship/services from April 1, 2021 to April 4, 2021.

But just yesterday evening, with the situation becoming more and more serious, the IATF issued Resolution No. 106-A placing the NCR, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal under ECQ and repealing IATF Resolution No. 105. Hence, liturgical celebrations with the public in attendance in these areas are again prohibited, effective March 27, 2021 until April 4, 2021. With this development, I offer the following thoughts:

First, as I stated above, let us enjoin everybody to intensify our prayers to the Lord, praying among others, the Oratio Imperata and the Mass In Time of Pandemic, if liturgically possible, so that this pandemic will end the soonest. Let us pray in particular for the people in the archdiocese and dioceses in the NCR and neighboring provinces. Let us ask the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the fatherly protection of St. Joseph.

Second, let us not forget those suffering most from this pandemic, especially the poor families and those who lost their daily income in order to put food on the table. Together, let us put our efforts to bring mercy and compassion to them.

Third, let us remind ourselves to exert extra effort to make sure that public health standards and hygiene protocols are strictly followed in our church activities. Also, it is good for us to be always in close coordination with our local government and health authorities in this situation. And let us continue to remind our people of the urgency and importance of observing strictly these hygiene protocols every time and everywhere during this pandemic.

In view of the above, I enjoin you to please convey these important concerns to our people and to move them to pray fervently and unceasingly for the Lord to intervene, so that we will be spared from this rise of infection, and that there will be an end to this pandemic.

As we are about to end the season of Lent and enter into the celebration of the Paschal Triduum, may our prayers bring us more hope and confidence in the mercy and compassion of the Lord.

+ Romulo G. Valles, D.D.

Archbishop of Davao

CBCP President

Palm Sunday, 28 March 2021