



# CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ABUJA

No. 9, New Bussa Close, Area 3, P. O. Box 286, Garki, Abuja - FCT, Nigeria

24th March, 2020.

## AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO THE PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS AND LAITY OF THE CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ABUJA ON THE PASTORAL AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVID-19 VIRUS

A Meeting of the Board of Consultors, Vicars, Deans and Health officials was held in the Chancery on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March in view of the increasing spread of the COVID-19 Virus, to suggest ways of ensuring our individual and collective good health and to also explore concrete measures to be taken proactively. My earlier letter of March 20<sup>th</sup> was to encourage us to do our best in taking preventive measures while participating in common liturgical functions.

However, following the press briefing by Boss Mustapha, Secretary to the Government of the Federation and Chairman, Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 pandemic held on Monday, 23rd March, 2020, we had to review the health and pastoral measures we were to adopt at liturgical gatherings.


The Government instructed among other things that "leaders of different faiths have been encouraged to restrict services and activities that involve mass gathering of more than fifty of their adherents. State governments are also enforcing this policy at different levels". But in the case of Abuja and Lagos, the Secretary to the Government added: **"All Abuja and Lagos residents are strongly advised to stay at home, avoid mass congregation of any kind as well as non-essential outings, until further advice is given"**.

On account of the 'stay at home' order especially for the residents of Abuja and Lagos, we hereby temporarily suspend the common celebration of the Holy Mass, Stations of the Cross, Benediction, etc. This will be reviewed in two weeks. We urge that

- Priests should celebrate live Masses and have them streamed via internet services (where possible). Parishioners should also be encouraged to participate at Masses aired on EWTN, CTV, Lumen Christi, AIT and other television channels.
- Priests should explain clearly to the faithful that being unable to participate physically at communal liturgical functions is also an opportunity to seek alternative ways of living our faith and prayer life to the full in families or neighborhoods.
- Priests are requested to send out daily reflections, prayers and homilies to their parishioners using text messages, Whatsapp, Twitter, etc.
- Families are to be encouraged to pray together and celebrate the word of God.
- Social distancing is encouraged.
- Priests should make known to their parishioners the telephone number of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC): 0800 9700 0010

The COVID – 19 VIRUS is closer than before. Be alert! Be prayerful! Take matters of personal hygiene more seriously.

In communion of prayers.

  
Most Rev. Ignatius A. Kaigama,  
Archbishop of Abuja.

