



THE TITULAR ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF PENANG DIOCESE OF PENANG

Catholic Diocesan Centre

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CHANCERY NOTICE

Suspension of Penitential Services in the Diocese of Penang

With Immediate Effect

The COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia has seen a rapid increase in the number of cases lately. The Ministry of Health, Malaysia has reported 14 new cases in March 4, 2020 bringing it to a total of 50 cases so far in Malaysia.

The Diocese of Penang has initiated steps to contain any spread of the COVID-19 infection from human to human, within our parishes and community.

In this regard, all **Penitential Services this year during the Season of Lent is suspended with immediate effect**. Due to this grave and urgent necessity¹, the Bishop of Penang, Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis has decided at all masses within the weekend of 22nd & 29th March 2020 on the 4th & 5th Sundays of Lent, the presiding priest shall give a **General Absolution** to all present.² As for the chapels and mass centres in the Diocese of Penang, this general absolution will be done at any time during the Season of Lent. However, priests are requested to make themselves available for individual confessions as and when required.

The Bishop also request that all parishes, priest, parishioners take the necessary steps to prevent any possible infection and more importantly to curtail any spreading of the infection within our community. The following steps should be encouraged as a public service in instilling good prevention protocols.

- Any person feeling ill or having symptoms of influenza is requested to voluntarily self-isolate at home until back to health. Please avoid coming into contact in gatherings be it masses, meetings or fellowships.
- Wash hands frequently. Proper hand hygiene should be practiced at all times.
- All persons who have recently returned from China, Korea, Japan, Italy and Iran are advised to self-quarantine for 14 days as per the advisory of the Ministry of Health, Malaysia.

¹ Canon 961

² Please refer to the attachment for the rites on General Absolution to be used during mass.

Adherence to the above instructions will hopefully serve the purpose of preventing the spread of the COVID-19.

The Church will always exercise the virtues of prayer, faith and respect for the health and well-being of our fellow beings in this period where the whole global community is striving to combat and curb the virus from spreading.

For further information and questions on this matter, please contact the Chancery during office hours (Mondays to Fridays from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm).

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
Chancery
Tel: 04-2292742

Let us continue to pray for God's Healing Grace and Mercy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Fr. Dominic Santhiyagu, J.C.L.', written in a cursive style.

Fr. Dominic Santhiyagu, J.C.L
Vice-Chancellor
Penang Diocese