



Catholic Diocese of Ndola

Bishop's Office

MEMO

To: Vicars Forane
All Priests
Religious Men and Women and
All the Lay Faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Ndola

From: Bishop

Cc: Diocesan Senior Management
Programmes Manager – Radio Icengelo

Date: Tuesday 31st August 2021

Subject: Guidelines on the manner of conduct in the reduced Era of the Coronavirus (Covid – 19) and it's Preventive Measures in the Diocese

Following the significant reduction in numbers of new infections of the pandemic of Covid – 19 cases which has really taken it's toll on our life as experienced in the country and in particular in our Diocese, I wish to once again remind all in the Diocese to continue carefully adhering to and observing the provided guidelines by the Ministry of Health of the Government of the Republic of Zambia.

As earlier promised in my previous communique to review the guidelines after a certain period of time, and in line with the recently pronounced measures by the Government of the Republic of Zambia, I provide the following revised measures in this period effective today:

1. **Masses and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:**
 - a. Celebration of **Daily Weekday Masses** which was reduced to once a week, can now begin to revert to the old practice of being celebrated daily in the parishes and institutions; Convents inclusive.
 - b. **Sunday Masses** – which were reduced and left to the discretionary judgement of individual parish priests, can now be increased depending on the population of particular parishes to accord the faithful an opportunity to worship in a well-spaced and health environment keeping in mind the required social distance. I further recommend and encourage parishes to maintain celebrating Vigil Sunday Masses on Saturdays to have even distribution of numbers of worshippers at a given Sunday celebration.
 - c. Parish Priests are urged to keep the celebrations as short as possible, thus the singing during Mass must continue to be regulated to that effect.



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- d. Radio Icengelo Management must continue to work hand-in-hand with the Office of the Director of Pastoral Programmes of the Diocese in devising a schedule of live streaming the celebration of Daily Masses on Radio and Facebook for the faithful in the Diocese. In the near future, the celebration of live daily mass on radio must be upheld as part of normal radio programming. I urge the priests in Kitwe to adhere to the published Mass celebration schedule for the same, which shall further be extended to other priests in the Diocese beyond Kitwe once the timings of the Daily Mass is revised by the Radio Management.
- e. **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** can resume and continue to be celebrated once a month in all parishes.

2. **Funerals:**

- a. Once again, I reiterate on the discretion of individual Parish Priests to play a major role on funerals, as they are the people on the ground. Thus, each individual parish priest will continue to determine how funerals will be celebrated in their respective parishes. What must be avoided is the huge gathering of people at funerals. Priests must ensure that whatever form of funeral celebration they choose, strict Health Guidelines are followed. Priests may conduct burial rites at the graveyard.

I repeat, priests must ensure that the number of the people is regulated at these funerals.

3. **Small Christian Communities' and Lay Groups' Meetings:**

- a. Meetings of Small Christian Communities in all parishes can gradually resume;
- b. Lay Groups' meetings and all other gatherings that were earlier suspended, can also resume gradually in small numbers at all levels: Parish, Deanery and Diocese; necessary permission must be sought from various Office bearers at each level;
- c. In both contexts, when they meet, they must see to it that the stipulated Health Guidelines are strictly observed. Long meetings are strongly discouraged.

4. **Catechism Classes and Holy Childhood Masses:**

- a. All Catechism classes which were earlier suspended can gradually begin just as the Schools have safely re-opened;
- b. Masses for the children can also resume with proper assessments in place to ensure the safety of our children.

5. **Celebration of Sacraments in Parishes:**

The celebration of the following sacraments that are in themselves close and physical contact sacraments (Baptism, Confession, Confirmation and Anointing



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of the Sick) that was suspended, can gradually and cautiously resume to be celebrated.

6. Bishop's Pastoral Visitation Programme and Appointments:

- a. The Bishop's Pastoral Visitations Programme remain suspended until further notice.
- b. Furthermore, all physical appointments and engagements with the bishop are suspended until further notice.

7. Covid – 19 tests and General Precaution:

Everyone is encouraged to do voluntary tests for Covid – 19: There is no shame in advising other people correctly on the status of oneself regarding the Covid – 19 disease. Anyone not feeling well should immediately abstain from taking part in any communal liturgical celebration.

I urge you to religiously follow the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Health and the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPPI). These include the following:

- a. *Wearing your masks properly in public;*
- b. *Washing your hands thoroughly / sanitizing regularly;*
- c. *Observing physical distance;*
- d. *Avoiding unnecessary travel;*
- e. *Avoiding large group gatherings (and limiting the number of people at funerals and weddings, while observing the Covid – 19 Protocols, etc)*
- f. *Sharing information with others on Covid – 19 prevention; and*
- g. *Seeking Medical attention and Guidance in good time.*

It is important for all to continue abiding by the given guidelines for the smooth running of the ecclesial matters. Furthermore, everyone must be alert to the fact that the pandemic of Covid – 19 is among us as a threat to human life.

Let us remain a faith community that takes responsibility for each other's well-being. As we face and combat the Covid – 19 pandemic, let us unite in prayer. Entrusting you all to the maternal intercession of our Lady and Mother, Mary, the Immaculately Conceived!

Rt. Rev. Dr. Benjamin Phiri
Bishop of Ndola

