



## SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF MISSISSAUGA

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For the Glory of God

March 30, 2020

Circular

Prot. No. 28/2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

In this challenging time of COVID-19, it is more important for the Church to be closer to the suffering People of God. In view of this effective closeness and togetherness, the Eparchy of Mississauga held an emergency Pastoral Council meeting on March 21, 2020 and about 60 people from all over Canada, representing the Pastoral Council and Eparchy's various departmental heads attended this meeting. After a detailed analysis of the present crisis we constituted a task force by name 'COVID-19 Crisis Management Team' in Eparchial level and decided to begin its units in every parish and mission. I am very happy to inform you that, to respond to this sad situation, COVID-19 Crisis Management Team, consisted of various experts and committed volunteers, under their pastors, have already been started functioning quite effectively through out our Eparchy.

The first eparchial level meeting of the COVID-19 Crisis Management Team held on March 25, 2020, discussed the team's, vision, mission, and core values. The team set the Vision as "To protect human life from all adversities and accompany them with total wellbeing in physical, mental, spiritual and social dimensions of life during COVID-19 pandemic"; and Mission as "To create a seamless response system emphasizing the unique cultural and social values and belief systems of our community without neglecting the people of God at large. We also want to ensure the quality of life and make sure we have a suitable support system to offer them during this crisis". The COVID-19 Crisis Management Team discussed the community's various needs and identified five core priority areas: Physical Health, Spiritual Health, Mental Health, Social needs and Financial

needs. The team also agreed to follow appropriate professionalism while serving the community.

Again, on March 28, 2020 another urgent Pastoral Council meeting was convened and evaluated the situation and took appropriate decisions. It is highly praiseworthy to note that the SMYM (Syro- Malabar Youth Movement) of the Eparchy of Mississauga has developed a website with a view to share the updated information to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic effectively. Please see the link, <http://smymcanada.com>. I wholeheartedly congratulate its entire technical team. Let us pray incessantly to the heavenly Father to save us and the whole world; and I encourage everyone to do whatever we can to overcome this challenging situation.

It is during this time of severe crisis that we enter the Holy Week, commemorating the Paschal mysteries of the Lord. Let us join our prayers to the passion of Jesus Christ and pray for the gift of Divine Mercy. In keeping with the directives issued by the government and the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, the following guidelines are issued by the Syro-Malabar Church for the celebration of the Holy Week liturgies in our churches. Kindly adhere to these guidelines.

1. On the basis of the restrictions imposed for the assembly and movement of people to contain this pandemic, it is decided that the rites of the Holy Week are to be celebrated without the gathering of the faithful.
2. The Bishop will celebrate the liturgies in the cathedral and the priests in their respective parishes. However, care should be taken to see that there are not more than five persons present at any time.
3. As far as possible live streaming of the liturgical celebrations should be done for the benefit of the faithful.

4. On Palm Sunday, palms just enough for those present (if available) need to be blessed. The palms need not be distributed to others on Palm Sunday.
5. The Chrism Mass celebrations are postponed. It can be held later, may be in connection of Pentecost.
6. On Holy Thursday, the washing of feet is to be omitted.
7. The traditional braking of the bread should be limited to individual families. There should be no common breaking of the bread either in Family Units or in any kind of small groups.
8. On Good Friday no public veneration of the Cross should be held. These may be scheduled on a later occasion, on September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, for instance.
9. On Holy Saturday the Blessing of the Water need not be held for distributing to the people. This can be done at a later time.
10. The Easter rituals need not be held at night. Offering the morning Holy Qurbana in the morning will suffice.
11. The Holy Week should be a time of incessant prayers in families. Reading of the Scripture and praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the Stations of the Cross and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy will help the faithful to live in the Spirit of the Holy Week.

Hoping to experience the compassion and protection of the Lord during this time of severe afflictions and restrictions, let us unite ourselves to the salvific mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ. May our Merciful Father bless us, our Eparchy, our Church and the whole world.

Yours cordially in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mar Jose Kalluvelil', with a small cross symbol to the left.

Mar Jose Kalluvelil

Bishop of Mississauga