

Celebration of Liturgy in Parish Churches Archdiocese of Guwahati

June 08, 2020

Dear Fathers, Sisters and Brothers,

Govt of India has allowed the opening of the places of worship with effect from 8th June, 2020 with certain conditions due to Covid 19. The rules are stringent and are hard to follow. Each parish in our Archdiocese will make its own regulation by a joint sitting of the parish priest and the Parish Council taking into consideration the following suggestions.

1. Strictly follow the Govt guidelines.
2. We will not have Holy Mass in the Parish Churches till 30th June. A review will be made then, if necessary, taking into consideration the guidelines issued by the Govt.
3. Encourage the faithful to have daily prayer service and Bible reading in their own homes. It will sustain their faith.
4. You may leave the Parish Church open for the public from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. daily in case individuals want to come and pray for some time in the Church but keeping the prescribed norms.
5. Place posters in the Church compound displaying precautions to be taken when they come to the Church.

Precautions to be taken when prayer or Holy Mass is conducted

1. Volunteers will guide the faithful as they come to the Church.
2. Thermal screening will be done as faithful enter the Church.
3. Facility will be provided for sanitization of hands at the entrance of the Church.
4. The Church doors should be kept open so that the faithful need not touch the door knobs.
5. People who have fever and respiratory problems will not attend Church.
6. Sanitize the Church and furniture both in the morning and in the evening, i.e., before the Church is open and after the Church has been closed.
7. Nobody will be allowed into the Church compound without mask.
8. There will be separate doors for entry and exit.
9. Entrance to the Church and exit from the Church will be one at a time, keeping safe distance.
10. Holy Water containers will be removed from the holders.
11. Offerings may be put into the offering box or be collected in a bag that has a long handle.
12. There will be no offertory procession. The faithful who bring offerings will place them in front of the altar before the Holy Mass.
13. Distance will be kept, preferably one square meter, when people are in the Church.

14. On Sundays the parish could arrange more Masses in order to reduce the number of people attending each Holy Mass. (A priest could celebrate up to three Masses on Sundays and two Masses on weekdays)
15. Holy Communion will be given in the hand.
16. There will be no choir. Each one will sing from his/her own place. One person may use a mike to sustain the singing. No common prayer or hymn books will be provided.
17. We will greet one another and exchange sign of peace by a deep bow and not by shaking hands.
18. Baptisms and marriages are allowed in the Church but the group will be small, not more than 20 for the present, and they will keep the prescribed distance.
19. Confessions can be heard in a space that is large enough to maintain safe distance and privacy.
20. Funerals can be conducted with not more than 20 mourners.

In all our actions let us be motivated by love, health and safety of the people. Keep in touch with the community leaders and pray daily for your people. In case they are in material need, go out to help them. It is the month of the Sacred Heart. May the love of Lord Jesus fill our hearts and minds!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, starting with a cross symbol and the name 'John Moolachira'.

+John Moolachira
Archbishop of Guwahati