



Catholic Media Services Ltd

The Catholic Centre, 31 Independence Square, Port of Spain, Trinidad

Tel: 1-868-623-7620 • Fax: 1-868-623-9468 • E-mail: camsel@catholictr.org

STATEMENT ON COVID-19 FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN

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The Catholic Church joins in solidarity and prayer for those impacted or working to treat COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease 2019).

An interdisciplinary team within the Church and the Archdiocese of Port of Spain continues to monitor and will take necessary steps to provide any assistance where required.

At this moment **there is no change to the Church's liturgical celebrations.**

COVID-19 has been detected in over 70 countries. The Church is closely following the guidelines and expertise of the Public Health/Epidemiology Department of the Ministry of Health.

COVID-19 is NOT an airborne virus and is transmitted through droplets and contamination with dirty surfaces.

Symptoms may include: flu-like symptoms, fever, coughing, sneezing, acute diarrhea. In severe cases there may be shortness of breath, pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome and kidney failure.

Prevention is the most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones from getting the COVID-19 virus.

Scientifically recommended ways to decrease transmission include:

- ❖ Persons with flu-like symptoms should self-isolate themselves so as to avoid contact with persons in public spaces.
- ❖ Sanitise hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. AVOID touching the face, eyes, nose or mouth especially after touching dirty surfaces.

- ❖ Cover the nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough. This would prevent small droplets from being propelled into an uninfected person.
- ❖ Avoid close contact with persons showing flu-like symptoms.
- ❖ A person with a healthy immune system is more likely to survive the viral episode. The immune system can be supported in many ways: a healthy diet with fresh fruits and vegetables; exercise; relaxation; proper sleep; minerals and supplements (especially vitamin C 1 gram per day)
- ❖ There are certain categories of patients that are vulnerable to morbidity/mortality when exposed to viral infections. These include: the obese; elderly; poor nutrition; diabetics; lung/heart disease; other chronic disease; persons on immune-suppressants and those with poor hygienic practices.

Please be assured that the Church, in collaboration with the experts in Public Health/Epidemiology locally and regionally, are closely monitoring the situation. You are urged to keep abreast of any updates on the Archdiocese's position on this matter via facebook.com/catholictt and the *Catholic News*.

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