



DIOCESE OF BELLARY

Bishop's House, Cantonment, Bellary – 583 104, KARNATAKA, INDIA

Tel: 08392 - 240 315, 240 308, E: bhousebly@gmail.com

Website: www.bellarydiocese.in

BISHOP HENRY D'SOUZA
BISHOP OF BELLARY

CIR. NO: 189

APR. 16, 2020

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings of peace and joy to you!

“FEAR NOT, I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD” (Jn. 16:33)

01. Pastoral care during India Lock Down II

As the Prime Minister of India has declared India Lockdown II, from April 15 to May 3, we request priests to reside in their respective places and celebrate daily Mass in their respective churches or convent chapels without the presence of the people. Priests and the religious shall continue to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, Prayer of the Church, and other devotions regularly, without people. We request parish priests to ensure that religious communities are provided with Holy Communion without deficiency.

Due to the strict regulation imposed on gathering of people, denying public access to Sunday Mass, the Faithful are dispensed from the Sunday obligation of Mass till the lock down is lifted. We hereby exempt the Faithful from the Obligation of participating in the Holy Mass on Sundays and days of obligation till the lock down is in place in the respective district or locality.

All Catholics more particularly children and youth may be assisted and encouraged to nurture one's own spiritual life. In these difficult times, every Catholic family should make their residences Home Churches which are living temples of divine presence. All Catholics are urged to increase personal prayer life, strengthen family prayer, explore the richness of Sacred Scripture and deepen the understanding of the faith. Therefore we encourage you:

- a. To follow the Holy Mass on Social Media and be united with the Lord spiritually (YouTube at <http://bellarydiocese.in/2020>).
- b. Reading prayerfully daily liturgical readings and reflection.
- c. Study of the Holy Bible and Catechism of the Catholic Church.

02. Doing our best, with courage to face the worst

We urge the entire Catholic community of the diocese to FULLY cooperate with the Government in complying with the regulations during the lockdown period. Only personal discipline and collective action, trusting in God can save us from the dreaded pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has severely disrupted the pastoral and social life, hitting very hard the poor, the migrants and the aged. Experts have anticipated a sharp economic slump caused by halting economic activity, collapsing trade, and greater stress in the agricultural and labour sectors.

While there are no signs of widespread food shortages yet, let us all be ready to face any eventuality which may arise due to protracted Covid-19 crisis by using our resources wisely and prudently like Joseph of the Old Testament.

03. Live Streaming of daily Holy Mass and Adoration

We are continuing the live streaming of daily Holy Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for the benefit of our people. During the evening adoration we would be dealing with the Ten Commandments, Seven Sacraments, Word of God and Prayer. Please encourage the faithful, reminding them periodically, to access it on YouTube at <http://bellarydiocese.in/2020>

Sundays : 7.30 AM and 7.30 PM
Weekdays : 7.00 AM and 7.30 PM

04. Appeal to priests

Once again we request all parish priests to postpone baptisms (unless in emergency) and nuptials until the nationwide restriction is lifted. Funerals be held in compliance with the regulations. We urge all priests to reside in their respective places throughout the lock down period and be available for people. We appeal to all pastors and chaplains to FULLY abide by the restrictions imposed by the civil authorities in their movements, gatherings and celebrations. The need of maintaining social distance should be complied strictly. Let us take it as God-permitted opportunity to make our Catholic homes mini-churches. Therefore, family heads and adults in the families should take responsibility to explain to the other members, especially the little ones the Catholic faith and lead daily family prayer. That's how the community grew in the early times of Christianity.

05. Appeal to assist those affected by Covid-19

We earnestly appeal to all our priests, the religious, individuals and institutions to assist all the needy – neglected, migrants, labourers, and elderly etc. who are affected by Covid-19 or by the nation-wide shut down. Let us do our best to ensure that no one suffers due to neglect, deprivation and isolation. The following are the help lines:

- ❖ Medical assistance : 9886282745 (St. Mary's Hospital)
- ❖ Other assistance : 8296392049 (BDDS)
- ❖ Karnataka Emergency Services: 104 & National 107
- ❖ Ballari: 08392-277100, WhatsApp: 8277888866,
- ❖ Koppal: 08539-221303 & Raichur: 08532-226020

THE LORD HAS RISEN INDEED, HALLELUIAH!

With best wishes and prayers,

+ Henry D'Souza
Bishop of Bellary