

**SECOND IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF TURKEY**  
On the serious crisis of COVID-19 (coronavirus)

In respect and responsible collaboration with the behavioural measures issued by the President of Religious Affairs of Turkey - DIYANET – in front of the health crisis that is aggravated in recent days, the Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Bishops of Turkey - CET - determines the following rules which will be applied from Thursday 19 March 2020.

1. Meetings of parish groups and other gatherings in our churches are suspended.
2. It is necessary to avoid celebrating mass with massive assistance of the faithful. The Mass will be celebrated in a private way, with a limited number of faithful, that is necessary for the liturgical service.
3. Churches could be remained open for private prayer. Those who prefer to close completely are free to do so.
4. For Sunday Mass and Celebrations for Holy Week, if the health crisis continues, each parish will study the possibilities of using "Social Media" by instructing to the faithful for they could follow these celebrations in "online" sources and in communion of prayer.
5. As a consequence of the fore mentioned articles, the faithful will be excused from the obligation to fulfil the festive precept (cf. can. 1246-1248 of the C.I.C.).
6. Periodically bearing of consecrated Host for Eucharistic communion, prepared with the "Celebration of the Word" could be asked to parish priests and chaplains of the religious communities that have a chapel and tabernacle for the Eucharistic reserve. The entrance of the people who doesn't belong to the stable community of the community chapels is not permitted.
7. The religious communities that have a chapel and tabernacle for the Eucharist, may ask the parish priests and chaplains to bring periodically the consecrated hosts for the Eucharistic communion, prepared with the "Celebration of the Word". In the chapels of the communities the people who do not belong to the stable community the entrance is not allowed.
8. In these days, it is always necessary to follow the general recommendations for daily life: do not leave the home if it is not necessary, frequently wash your hands with soap or antibacterial gel, do not greet by your hand and avoid physical contact, talk with other people in one meter away, etc.

These norms will be cancelled, as given as the official instruction for returning to the normal daily life by the Ministry of Health and Religious Affairs of Turkey.

We have confidence to the understanding and common sense of everyone for protecting of common good and avoiding of infecting and spread of COVID 19 (Coronavirus).

United in prayer, we ask from God the merciful Father to have compassion on all humanity who suffers in this trial of faith, hope and love. We entrust our prayers to the intercession of Mary, Theotokos, Mother of God and our Mother, who accompanies us in this valley of suffering.

*Istanbul, 19 March, Feast of Saint Joseph, Spouse of B.V.M., Year of the Lord 2020.*



*+ Rubén Tierrablanca, ofm.*  
+ Rubén TIERRABLANCA GONZÁLEZ, ofm.  
Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul  
President of Conference Episcopal of Turkey (CET)