



# Simla Chandigarh Diocese

Bishop's House, P.O. Box No: 709, Sector 19-A Chandigarh - 160 019, INDIA.

† Ignatius L. Mascarenhas

Bishop of Simla-Chandigarh

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TEL: 0172-2775777, 2773777

FAX: 0172-2781630

EMAIL: bpignatius@gmail.com  
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## CORONA VIRUS

Dear Fathers /Sisters / Brothers,

Humanity is presently facing the dramatic challenge of the COVID-19, coronavirus pandemic. This coronavirus pandemic gripping the world, highlights the frailty and vulnerability of human life, and it also offers another opportunity for people to unite in solidarity.

"For each person, believer or nonbeliever, this is a good time to understand the value of brotherhood, of being linked to one another in an indissoluble way." The human family is challenged to feel and live truly as an interconnected and interdependent family," said Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

"The prevalence of the coronavirus has demonstrated this global significance, having initially affected only one country and then spread to every part of the world.

As a church, one of our sacred duties is to look after the health and safety of the community gathered each day for worship and prayer in our parishes, communities and institutions. Part of that duty is to prevent and respond to infectious diseases that may be in the community. Therefore, it is advisable that our parishes implement precautionary measures to help prevent the transmission of any virus:

1. Encourage our people not to shake hands at the sign of peace but to greet each other with folded hands(namaste).
2. Encourage our people to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
3. On Good Friday at the Veneration of the Cross discourage people from kissing the Cross. The blessing with a raised Cross would be adequate. Those who desire, they could come in a queue, make reverence with a bow and go back.
4. Before distribution of Holy Communion, the Priest/Minister could purify their hands in a bowl of water with soap/sanitizer.
5. Holy water fonts be kept dry.

Our Christian faith tells that during these troubled times we need to rely more on God's intervention, his mercy and compassion, besides taking other precautions and the needed medical healthcare. Therefore, it is most opportune moment to engage ourselves and exhort our faithful to recourse to personal prayer and other devotional exercises, such as reading the Word of God, participating in the Eucharistic Adoration, organizing Prayer services and reciting the Holy Rosary. These devotions will help us feel the closeness of the Almighty in our sickness and health, and will also give us the spiritual strength to resign ourselves to God's holy will. In prayer, we also draw strength to reach out our loving service to those who are in need of our assistance.

These norms to be followed till Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020.

This circular has to be read and explained to the people on 15.03.2020, the third Sunday of Lent.

Given on the Feast of St. Matilda, on Saturday, 14.03.2020 at the Bishop's House, Chandigarh.

With every good wish and prayers.

Yours sincerely in Christ

† Ignatius Mascarenhas  
Bishop of Simla Chandigarh



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NB: Both the Diocesan Pastoral Council (28.03.2020) and the Seminar for the Priests & Religious(31March to 2April) is postponed and further details regarding the same will be intimated to you later on.

On Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, we will have the Chrism Mass and it is a day of Recollection for all the Priests. It begins at 10.30am and will end with the Chrism Mass at 6.00pm. There will be a talk, adoration and confession on that day. Parish Priests are requested to bring along the Holy Oil containers.

(PS:Some contents of the Circular is adapted from the Pastoral letters of the Archdioceses of Bombay & Bangalore.)