



ARCHDIOCESE OF AĞANA

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An Important Message by the Archdiocesan COVID-19 Task Force

Nov. 12, 2020

Dear Clergy and all Catholic faithful:

The following is in response to inquiries regarding why the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica was not included on the list of churches closed after the clergyman from Saint Anthony Catholic Church recently tested positive.

The Archdiocesan COVID-19 Task Force followed the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines when implementing measures related to this case. It determined the following:

The Cathedral-Basilica was not closed because there was no threat of direct exposure. Although the Ordination was celebrated there on Saturday, Nov. 7th and the clergyman who tested positive was present, his proximity to others and presence at the celebration was not considered “close contact” as per Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. The entire congregation did not fit the definition of “close contact”.

The CDC definition states: “Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset or for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection until the time the patient is isolated.”

However, with the First Mass at Saint Anthony on Sunday, Nov. 8, the level of threat is greater. The clergyman who has since tested positive concelebrated at this Mass and was much closer to other clergy, who were concelebrants.

The priests who were identified as “close contacts” have been placed into quarantine awaiting the results of their COVID test.

Their parishes were closed due to them being in quarantine and out of an abundance of caution, have deep cleaned and sanitized their churches with the exception of the

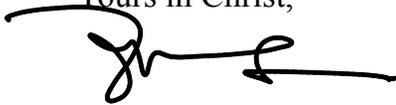
Cathedral-Basilica because the pastor has not celebrated Mass at the Cathedral-Basilica but did so at Our Lady of Purification after the First Mass at St. Anthony.

Only those who were in “close contact” with the infected clergyman are being identified for contact tracing. The entire congregation did not fit the definition of close contact. As a precautionary measure, we ask that those who attended the 11 a.m. Mass in Tamuning on Sunday, Nov. 8th to monitor their symptoms and should there be any concerns, to contact your doctor.

Our Archdiocese continues to work diligently to improve our practices and protocols and safeguard the faithful. In general, as a precaution, anyone who has attended Mass such as the Nov. 7 Ordination Mass should monitor their health. If you have concerns or begin to show symptoms, please contact your doctor. This is a good measure to take regarding any Mass one may have attended.

Thank you for your inquiries. With hope and humility, we place our trust in our Lord.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Crisostomo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Father Mike Crisostomo

Vicar for Clergy

On behalf of all members of the Archdiocesan COVID-19 Task Force