



ARCHDIOCESE OF AGANA

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Protocol No. 2020-053

Archbishop's Pastoral Message on faith and perseverance during trying times

My dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

Fear and anxiety are growing both here on Guam and abroad as people worry about the threat of the Novel Coronavirus known as COVID-19 and its impact on our lives and livelihood.

I find the following scriptural passage very helpful:

“Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.” – Romans 12:12

Those are short, simple words but they hold much meaning for Catholics and Christians in general. Essentially, we are reminded that no matter the circumstances in our lives and regardless what difficulties may arise locally, regionally or globally, God is with us in every moment of our existence.

Knowing this, how are we to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic? Be Christians! Be courageous. Be strong in Christ and carry his light of love and kindness to others around us. Be confident in a Provident Father who, in all things, works for good for those who call on Him.

As the Shepherd of the Catholic Church on Guam, I encourage everyone to take the proper precautionary measures against the spread of the virus and other illnesses as advised by local public health experts and government officials. Stay updated on the latest news and advisories but please rely on authentic, reliable sources rather than believing or spreading hearsay, unsubstantiated information or fake news.

Above all, let the peace of Jesus Christ and good sense guide our words and actions, rather than fear and panic.

The Archdiocesan COVID-19 Leadership Team, collaborating with Public Health officials and the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission has assisted me in developing Mandatory Protocols as a precautionary prevention measure. I ask all Catholics to adhere to these mandatory measures, knowing that they are only temporary. Updates will be made as needed.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely. Should the status of our island given by the health agencies change, we will act accordingly.

We pray for all those who have already fallen ill or succumbed to this 2019 Novel Coronavirus throughout the world. We pray as well, for all healthcare workers, emergency respondents and all those caring for those already infected abroad. May the Lord shower them with the grace of the Holy Spirit to protect and guide them in their mission.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael J. Byrnes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend
Michael J. Byrnes, S.T.D.
Metropolitan Archbishop of Agaña