



## **DIRECTIONS FOR CONDUCTING THE MAIN PRAYERS IN THE PARISHES OF THE VICARIATE OF SOUTHERN ARABIA**

Our governments are taking several measures to reduce the risks of community transmission of the Coronavirus. In line with their guidelines: to limit the gatherings held in places of worship to the main prayers and also to reduce the prayer time as much as possible, I have decided on the following *exceptional modifications* for the parishes in our Vicariate.

Although we may have to reduce the number and the length of many communal prayers, the dignity of the celebrations and the devotion of the people should be kept alive as much as possible. For this purpose, I am issuing the following rules to be adapted according to the local circumstances while respecting the basic requirements from the government(s).

1. The main prayers of the churches, especially the Sacraments, are to continue. Communal prayers by prayer groups/small communities in the various church premises are to be discontinued until further notice.
2. Where the Morning Prayer or the Evening Prayer is celebrated before Mass it is prayed for 10 minutes. The presider proposes which parts can be shortened or dropped (e.g. only 1-2 verses of the Hymn, the responsory after the short reading etc.).
3. The rosary recited before Mass can be shortened from 5 decades to only 1 decade. It opens as usual and ends with “Hail, Holy Queen” and the concluding prayer.
4. The Stations of the Cross in Lent can be reduced to the Opening and Closing Prayers, and the essential part for each Station (“We adore you”, brief meditation and a single prayer).
5. Novenas can be reduced to just the central (main) novena prayer, omitting the other prayers and hymns. If needed, a single hymn may be sung while people leave the church. Distribution of the blessed bread, sprinkling with holy water, etc. is omitted for the present.
6. Holy Hours of Adoration can be reduced from 60 minutes to 15-25 minutes. Separate Adorations for small prayer groups should be cancelled in favour of the parish Holy Hour.
7. In most of our parishes the Weekday Masses already now are celebrated within 25 – 30 minutes. This timing can be kept easily if the homily is replaced by a 2-minute Gospel reflection or omitted if the readings are very long.



8. The Obligatory Masses should not exceed 40 – 45 minutes. This can be achieved by reducing some parts (e.g. incense, solemn entrance procession, the length of the singing during offertory and communion). The homily has to be short, especially when the readings are long. The Apostolic Creed can be recited instead of the Nicene Creed. The Prayers of the Faithful can be lesser in number and be kept short. There should always be a sufficient number of Communion ministers to shorten the time of distribution of the Holy Communion. The purification of the ciboria and communion plates can be done immediately after the mass in a dignified way. Finally, the announcements should be kept very short (with full text displayed on the notice boards and social media). Masses in the oriental rites need more time; the concerned priests will decide on the elements that can be shortened without affecting the devotion.
9. For the solemn celebrations of the Holy Week, further directives will be communicated in due course.

Keeping the rules of prudence and putting our trust in God we continue to pray that *“we may be always kept free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ”*.

Abu Dhabi, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020

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