



## Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle, Melbourne

6 Greenock Court

Greenvale, Victoria 3059, Australia

Phone: +61-(03) 83133678/+61408267777

[vg@syromalabar.org.au](mailto:vg@syromalabar.org.au)

### Statement from Bishop Bosco Puthur on liturgical implications in the light of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The following recommendations are believed to be proportionate to the current understanding of the coronavirus and the risks outlined by health authorities. They are consistent with the Catholic Church's prerogative to protect those who are most vulnerable.

- Individuals should consider their own health, including any potential to infect others with a contagious disease, before attending a public liturgical celebration.
- Holy Water should be temporarily removed from stoups at the doors of churches to reduce the possibility of transmission of the virus. Holy Water should continue to be available for people to take home.
- Parishes and other settings where liturgies are celebrated should make alcohol-based gels or rubs (or like products) available near entrances. Similar provisions should be considered for settings used for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- When exchanging the Sign of Peace, individuals should avoid shaking hands but say "Peace be with you" and offer a smile, wave, nod or bow.
- All Ministers of Holy Communion should take particular care to wash their hands before and after distributing. Appropriate means should be made available.
- The coronavirus is easily spread through saliva. In celebrations of the Holy Qurbana, it is therefore recommended that the Body of Christ only be administered in the hand because of the high risk of transmission if people continue to receive on the tongue. Ministers should seek to avoid contact with the communicant's hands.
- The faithful who are too unwell to attend Sunday Mass – whether due to coronavirus or some other condition – or are at particular risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus can honour their Sunday obligation by participating in a time of prayer within the home, reading the Scriptures or watching Mass on television.

Parish Priests, Chaplains and other Church leaders are encouraged to communicate their relevant advice with the faithful clearly and appropriately.

This advice should be considered alongside local Church and national health guidance, including from the Commonwealth Department of Health

Yours in Jesus,

+Bosco Puthur  
04/03/2020