



CHANCERY OF THE CATHOLIC METROPOLITAN ARCHDIOCESE OF KUALA LUMPUR

528, Jalan Bukit Nanas, 50250 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
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18th December 2021

Chan/MC/28/2021

CHANCERY NOTICE

Updates on Archdiocesan Public Health Protocols

In view of the upcoming Christmas and New Year celebrations, His Grace Archbishop Julian Leow, upon the recommendation of the members of the Archdiocesan Crisis Task Force, has decreed that the following protocols be adopted in all parishes, churches, chapels and Mass Centres for the safety of all parishioners.

1.0. Confessions

1.1. Confessions before Masses and by appointment may continue but parishes are to adhere strictly to the guidelines set out in Appendix D of the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Celebrating Sacraments under the National Recovery Plan.

<https://archkl.org/index.php/archkl-announcement-news/175-coronavirus-covid-19>

2.0. Testing

2.1. We have been reminded by health authorities that we will have to adapt to living alongside COVID-19 by making some deliberate choices about how to coexist.

2.2. One of the crucial steps which we must adopt in order to live with this virus is regular testing. With the advent of relatively affordable and accurate self-test kits, we are able to resume some level of face-to-face human interaction whilst ensuring that we and our loved ones are able to do so in relative safety.

2.3. An Archdiocesan Testing Policy will take effect from the 24/12/2021 to protect the most vulnerable and those under high risks categories. This is taking the cue from the National COVID-19 Testing Strategy.

2.4. Testing for children below the age of 12 - For children below the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination (except in the case of infants), it should be a rule to have the child take an approved antigen self-test before coming for any public gathering - first confessions, first holy communion, public Masses. It is recommended that such self-test would be valid for a duration of not more than 24 hours or for a longer period not exceeding 48 hours at the discretion of the Parish Priest. It is also the prerogative of the Parish Priest in consultation with the Parish Response Team to determine if such tests are administered at the parish level by trained personnel or at home. If administered at home, there should be a procedure of verifying the results at the parish level, eg. sending a camera shot of the test results to a designated person.



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2.5. Homebound - Both priests and extraordinary ministers of holy communion (EMOHC) may visit several of the home bound on a single day provided:

- a. The priest or the EMOHC takes a self-test in the morning or the evening before the day of the visit.
- b. The homebound person and his/her caretaker take a self-test in the morning or the evening before the day of the visit. If other family members are present during the visit (in the same room/hall), they should also take a test before the visit.

2.6. Home visits - if priests are visiting homes and families, they should also adopt the same protocol as 2.5 above.

2.7. In accordance with the National COVID-19 Testing Strategy, those who are exempted from vaccination due to medical grounds will need to perform a RTK-Ag self-test supervised by a member of the PRT or trained personnel prior to attending any gatherings in church.

2.8. Parishioners (especially frontliners - PRT volunteers, extraordinarily ministers of Communion, Ministers of Hospitality) should also be encouraged to test themselves regularly especially before attending public Masses and other gatherings.

2.9. While these testing procedures may seem cumbersome and inconvenient, they are intended to serve as a preventive measure and provide some comfort and peace of mind to the congregation, should a sporadic case be tested positive at a later stage.

3.0. Carolling

3.1. According to the latest SOP on the celebration of Christmas dated 17th December 2021 (Christmas SOP) house-to-house carolling is prohibited.

3.2. Although congregational singing is discouraged under Appendix C section 3 of the Archdiocesan Guidelines of Celebrating Sacraments, the Christmas SOP permits carolling within church premises under strict conditions. If the Parish Priest decides to have a short cantata / choral performance before the public Masses for Christmas, please adhere strictly to the following health recommendations:

- a. Choral members are to be masked and maintain social distancing.
- b. There should not be more than 10 choral members in the group.
- c. To keep the performance as brief as possible (15-30 minutes).
- d. Congregation to be reminded not to sing-a-long.



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4.0. TRIIS and Contact Tracing

4.1. The public health authorities are gradually moving our population to take greater personal responsibility for this pandemic. As a Church, we should also instil in our people the need to be civically responsible.

4.2. In case of a parishioner who had attended Mass or some other public function in the parish having been tested positive, kindly inform the Archbishop and the Chancery as soon as possible.

4.3. Please note that a Person Under Investigation may fall under one of three categories:

a. Positive Case - This refers to someone who is tested positive under a self-administered antigen test or a PCR test administered by a health facility. Such person must immediately report his/her condition using the MySejahtera app and they will receive an update within 12-18 hours. The person must immediately quarantine. The period of quarantine is usually 10 days as stipulated under the Home Surveillance Order which will appear on the MySejahtera app;

b. Close Contact - If the person had been in contact with a positive case during the infective period (which usually begins at least 2 days before the onset of symptoms) for a period of more than 15 minutes, at a distance of less than 1 metre (or in a confined room with poor ventilation) and unmasked (eg having a meal together), the person should immediately report this under the MySejahtera app and begin his quarantine for a period of 7 days from the last contact with the Positive Case. The Close Contact should test himself (using either the self-test or the PCR test) on Day 5 from the last encounter. As an added precaution, he/she should repeat the test on Day 8. Close contacts would include family members or persons living in the same household or working in the same office or studying in the same class as a Positive Case.

c. Casual Contact - Anyone else who had some fleeting engagement with the Positive Case which does not fall under the category of a Close Contact (eg attended Mass, made confession briefly, brief casual encounter in the hall way, received holy communion from the positive person etc.) is considered a casual contact. Family members and workplace colleagues of Close Contacts may also be regarded as Casual Contacts. Casual Contacts are not required to quarantine but should monitor their condition daily for 7 days and should take steps to test, report, isolate, inform and seek medical treatment should symptoms appear and become more severe (TRIIS).



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4.5. As part of our Christian duty and social responsibility and while maintaining confidentiality to protect the identity of persons, priests should take steps to notify and provide guidance to all persons who may be affected by the discovery of a Positive Case in the community to ensure that the public may take the necessary precautions for their own personal safety and that of their loved ones.

Let us continue to take all necessary measures to keep our parishes safe for the good of the faithful and to ensure that our priests are protected and healthy in order that they may continue to serve the people of God in the coming months and years.

Wishing you a Blessed Christmas.

Rev Fr Michael Chua
Chancellor
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur

