



**THE TITULAR ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF PENANG
DIOCESE OF PENANG**

Catholic Diocesan Centre
290 Macalister Road, 10450 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel: +604-2292761 / 2292742 Fax: +604-2285671
E-mail: trcb@pgdiocese.org / penangdiocese@gmail.com
Website: www.pgdiocese.org

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PKK/BDN/2020/03/026

Dear Clergy, Religious, Heads of Ministries and the Lay Faithful,

Re: Movement Control Order Implementation in the Diocese of Penang

Greetings of Joy, Mercy and Hope!

Adhering to the decision of the Malaysian Government on 16 March 2020 made under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 and the Police Act 1967, the Diocese of Penang has undertaken the following measures to mitigate the current situation of COVID-19 during this moment of uncertainty with effect from 18 March 2020 to 31 March 2020.

- a) Diocesan Staff with the approval of their Heads are encouraged to work from home, however, the Diocesan Office will remain open for those who need to work in the office following the necessary procedures and precautions. Offices and ministries are encourage to find creative ways to continue working in their day to day mission through various means so as to be in touch with the people. As for parish offices in the Diocese, it is left to the responsibility and discretion of the Parish Priest, considering the need to be contactable for funerals, sick calls, and other essential services.
- b) In reference to the Pastoral Letter dated 12 March 2020 by the Peninsular Malaysia Bishops, the churches, chapels, prayer rooms (where applicable) will continue to remain open for private and personal prayer and Eucharistic adoration at stipulated times decided by the parishes with the necessary precautions. Should there be a requirement from the government for a total lockdown, then the closure will be implemented immediately. I urge all clergy to remain in their respective parishes in this time of movement control to maintain a sense of presence and be available for the parishioners especially for essential services.

The weekend and solemnity live-streaming Masses in the Diocese of Penang throughout this duration will carry on as schedule. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LiveOnlinePenang>

- c) In the light of new developments, the decisions pertaining to Holy Week Services and the Adult Baptism this year will be informed in a combined pastoral letter which will be issued before 29 March 2020 by the three Bishops of Peninsular Malaysia.
- d) As for the Feast of St. Anne at Bukit Mertajam scheduled from 24th July to 2nd August 2020, and all other major Feast Days this year, an announcement will be made in due course.



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- e) It has been decided that the Clergy Annual Retreat in September 2020 will be held at Diocesan level with the Bishop of the Diocese. The retreat in the Diocese of Penang will be held in Stella Maris from 14th September – 17th September 2020. This will be from Monday dinner to Thursday lunch so as to allow priests to return on time to celebrate masses in Kelantan, Perlis and Kedah. The Council of Priests will form a team together with the Bishop to be responsible for this retreat.

In solidarity with the nation and the whole world, let us continue to allow the Spirit to inspire us to be Creative Missionary Disciples of Joy, Mercy and Hope, as we are “Sent with Joy to Heal”. With the assurance of the intercession of Mary our Mother, I remain united with all of you wherever you may be, even at a distance.

In confidence, let us take comfort in the very words of Jesus, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11: 28-30).

Wishing you a Blessed and Meaningful Journey of Faith in this Season of Lent.

“Be Disciples of Hope”

Sincerely in Christ,

Sebastian Francis

Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

