



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

6 Greenock Court  
Greenvale, Victoria 3059, Australia  
Phone: +61-(03) 83133678/+61408267777  
[bishop.melbourne@syromalabar.org.au](mailto:bishop.melbourne@syromalabar.org.au)

19 March 2020

Circular  
Prot.No.39/20/44

Dear Rev Fathers, brothers & sisters,

Considering the latest advice from the Government, Health authorities and Bishops Conference, our Eparchy has come to further decisions/directions as follows:

- no indoor Qurbana or Church event should be conducted with more than 100 attendees: no outdoor event is to be conducted for more than 500 people
- if more than 100 attendees might be expected for an indoor Holy Qurbana or other Church event, it should be cancelled, or split over two or more timeslots or venues (linked by live-stream)
- priests are thus granted permission to celebrate multiple Sunday Holy Qurbana as necessary
- holy water should be made available for taking home
- attendees must be instructed to spread out around the church – what we might call ‘physical distancing’
- Qurbana books (people’s version) shall not be distributed
- all but priests are dispensed from attending Sunday Qurbana: the faithful are to keep Sunday holy by setting aside time for personal prayer, family prayer, reading the Scriptures of the day, watching Holy Qurbana online, and asking God for the graces they would normally receive in Holy Communion
- priests should celebrate daily Holy Qurbana privately and offer it on behalf of those who cannot attend and for the whole nation
- the Second and Third Rites of Reconciliation should not be used; First Rite of Reconciliations should only be heard through a grill covered with a protective cloth
- prayers of intercession for an end to the pandemic and for the safety of all should be included in Qurbana and in private prayers
- Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals may be celebrated, if necessary, but restricted to immediate family members; baptisms and weddings can, of course, be postponed

- preparation for and celebration of Solemn Holy Communion and Confirmation for children should be postponed until the pandemic is over
- when Anointing the Sick, priests are given permission to lay on hands by holding them above rather than upon the head and to anoint using a cotton wool ball or bud or a protective glove which can be disposed of appropriately after a single use; anointing the head would be sufficient
- Priests should ensure that parishioners can contact them in emergencies.
- Baptism of infants should proceed but only with the parents and Godparents present with priest.

**All meetings relating to parish life should be suspended until further notice or conducted via video conferencing such as Zoom.**

**Having given these directions, I instruct you to incorporate the directions/decisions from the local Latin Dioceses/Archdioceses and parishes for the prudent conduct of all Syro-Malabar liturgy/services.**

**Holy Qurbana would be live telecasted online, Shalom TV, Eparchy website ([www.syromalabar.org](http://www.syromalabar.org)), Eparchy Facebook from this Sunday from Bishop Residence Chapel, Melbourne. (Link shall be sent soon with a flyer)**

**The following schedule may please be communicated to our community members:**

**Sundays at 10.00 am and 5.00 pm (AEDT)**

**Weekdays at 10.00 am - 5.00 pm (Monday-Saturday) (AEDT)**

At this time of pain and anxiety, let us entrust ourselves to the mercy of Lord who would never abandon us. As one family, I urge you to intensely pray relying on the intercession of Blessed Mother and all saints that the Lord be merciful to everyone across the world affected by this pandemic.

Yours in Jesus,



+Bosco Puthur  
19/03/2020

**I request Rev. Fathers to communicate this circular to all the community members at the earliest.**