

Press Release: COVID 19 Prayers and Prevention

The threat of Coronavirus is growing globally, as well as in Pakistan. The federal government and the respective provincial governments have announced a number of measures to contain the spread of the virus. On 18th March, 2020 the Catholic Church appreciated the steps taken by the government with the recent outbreak of Coronavirus COVID 19 in Pakistan.

Globally, 164 countries have been affected, more than 8,400 people have died and more than 196,000 infected by the disease as it spreads rapidly to new territories. In Pakistan total number of confirmed cases are 237. The last two decades saw three deadly virus spread SARS, MERS and now the deadliest one: COVID 19. The virus spreads virulently in more places forcing even the powerful countries to wrench their arms in despair. International impact of this virus attack is deadly. Economy is taking hard hit in many countries. Tourism is in violent turbulence, markets are wobbling. The crisis is one of the most critical challenges to humanity.

Meanwhile, government is taking steps to contain the pandemic as authorities in Punjab province converted all public sector universities' hostels into quarantine centres as an immediate arrangement. The Punjab government has enforced Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, this section empowers district administration to issue orders in public interest that may place a ban on any activity for a specific period of time.

The National Commission for Justice and Peace is seriously concerned about the outbreak of this virus and as a result the commission has suspended all of its activities in the field to cooperate with the government and play its responsible role in prevention. In a joint statement His Excellency Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad, Chairperson, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf (Mani) National Director and Mr. Cecil Shane Chaudhry Executive Director from the National Commission for Justice and Peace, a rights-based organization of Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference stated that the Catholic Church appreciates the government's efforts to fight Coronavirus and extends its full support and cooperation for any preemptive measures.

His Excellency Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad, Bishop of Islamabad/Rawalpindi, President, Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference and Chairperson, National Commission for Justice and Peace stated that Church welcomes preventive measures by the government and is continuously praying for the speedy recovery of those who are infected by the virus. Archbishop Arshad also invited the faithful to continue praying and fasting in the lent season for the sick and for the invention of an effective vaccination to fight the virus and for all who may feel anxious that Almighty Merciful God may give hope and encouragement and bring strength, comfort and healing to all. He also urged the community to cooperate with the government and act responsibly by staying at home, practicing social distancing or any other measure for protecting the spread of this virus.

NCJP Media Cell: