



International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church

*Patriarch's Office
50 Saint Thomas Place
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STATEMENT ON THE COVID-19 VIRUS

I have refrained from commenting on the Corona Virus Pandemic because it is vital that everyone listen to the medical community at this time. It is also essential for us to understand that our governments have authority over us, and we are called to obey them as long as their demands are not contrary to the Word of God. God is speaking through these voices of wisdom. Whether we are in complete lockdown or merely restricted to our homes, and even if we don't understand why this is all happening, we must humble ourselves and submit to those who have authority.

As Christians, we again need to reflect and focus on the Lord. Just a few weeks ago, we entered the season of Lent. For liturgical Christians, we went to the Ash Wednesday liturgies, and the priest put ashes on our heads to remind us of our mortality, powerlessness, and constant need for repentance. Little did we know then that this "tiny and unseen" virus would spread from mainline China and result in the lockdown of nations in Europe and create severe social distancing practices in countries around the world. Little did we know that the economy of the world would hang in the balance and threaten hundreds of large international businesses. Little did we know that many of our friends and neighbors would be facing a long stretch of unemployment. This "tiny unseen" virus has affirmed the truth we proclaimed on Ash Wednesday.

The Corona Virus has taught the West things that many in developing nations face daily. This year among our brothers and sisters in East Africa, massive floods and a plague of locust have left sections of the countries in famine. Many lost everything they had (which was so little). Many died and lost loved ones. In the Philippines, a volcano erupted, and the result is still impacting the communities in Luzon. Over and over again, the Philippines face natural disasters. These disasters not only destroy material objects but take human life. Usually, it is the very young and the elderly that are most affected. Of course, there are other disasters around the world happening even as I write this letter.

All of this reminds us that our humanity is weak, fragile, and mortal. It tells us that the God of all creation shares in this humanity by being human. The One who holds the universe together and for whom the universe was made is in the midst of us. The end of Lent is not that we are hopeless but rather that through participation in our humanity, particularly our death, and through our sharing and participating in His death, there is a new creation where we will proclaim He has Risen and death is conquered and the strife is over.

Now we pray. I believe this season of isolation, will result in a powerful growth in the things of the Spirit. It will cause us to have a new love for the liturgy, praise, and communion with our Church family. I hope it causes us to realize the importance of the Sacraments and sacramentals that we can easily take for granted or ritualize. I hope that it will draw us to understand the desperate situation we are in and bring us from that desperation to a deeper renewal of faith, hope, and especially love. Could it be that from this, we will have a more profound love for God and each other? Could it be that we will have an awakening in what it means to be in Christ Jesus?

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Finally, it is time for us to look around us and see those who need help. There are many, particularly the elderly and those who suffer from chronic or severe illnesses, who need us. Are there ways we can serve not only those in our church but in our neighborhoods. Many will be unemployed for some time. Is there a way we can reach out? It has always been the ministry of the church.

I want to thank those priests who have made the Eucharist available, sometimes in creative ways. I want to thank those who are live streaming the liturgies so we can all participate. As the father to fathers, I am so proud of each bishop, priest, and deacon. You have proved to be good and faithful servants.

Remember not to be afraid, for He is with you always. He will never leave you or forsake you. It is not a time of lament but a time to allow a song of praise and thanksgiving to grow in your heart and flow from your lips.

Under His mercy,



+Craig, Patriarch