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To: all Priests & Deacons of the Diocese of Paramaribo

***Reverend Brothers:***

***Please take note of the following announcement and make it known to the faithful during the coming celebrations:***

The Corona virus is spreading steadily throughout the world. So far, it has not yet been detected in our country. It is advisable, however, that we prepare ourselves for it and know what measures to take to protect our people and curb the spread.

The most important measures we can already take to prevent further spreading of the Corona virus and other diseases are:

- regular wash hands with water and soap (or with hand sanitizer on alcohol base);
- sneeze or cough into the fold of your elbow;
- use paper hand towels.

For further measures I refer to the announcements of the relevant authorities in our country.

If, unfortunately, it may come to the occurrence of the virus in Suriname, then the following will be in effect immediately for all celebrations throughout the diocese, until the spread of the virus is under control:

- during celebrations reception of communion on the tongue is not possible;
- communion can only be received on the hand and needs to be distributed by the celebrant alone;
- communion of the chalice (wine) is reserved for the celebrant alone;
- churchgoers will not shake hands during the sign of peace, but will make a simple head bow toward one another;
- there is to be no use of holy water for personal blessing in the church when entering or leaving.

I ask all to pray especially for all those worldwide who have fallen victim to this virus and for all who are taking care of patients with professionalism and care. Finally, I urge all that we support and assist each other to face this pandemic calmly.

May prayer help us to.

Sincerely,

*Karel Choennie*  
*Bishop of Paramaribo*