



# ARCHDIOCESE OF AGAÑA

CHANCERY

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September 29, 2020

Protocol No. 2020-114

## **Message from Archbishop Byrnes on return to celebration of the Holy Eucharist indoors**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

With prayer and discernment, I gladly announce that the Archdiocese of Agaña will return to celebrating the Holy Eucharist inside our churches following strict COVID-19 protocols.

The return to celebrating Masses indoors will be effective on Saturday and Sunday, October 3 and 4 on the weekend of the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time in order to give parishes adequate time to prepare their churches.

My decision comes after closely monitoring the situation and with continuous input from my brother priests, the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission (ALC) and different members of our Catholic community.

Above all, as in all things, we look to our loving Father for guidance as the Church and the general community navigate these unprecedented perilous waters of the COVID-19 pandemic. Celebrating and receiving Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist is vital to our lives and salvation as baptized children of God. We rejoice like children returning to the arms of our Father!

Just as with the first time the Archdiocese reopened its doors for indoor Masses several months ago, all who would attend Mass inside our houses of worship must abide with strict COVID-19 requirements. Mass attendance will be restricted to no more than 50 percent of the church capacity and proper distancing of one another will be practiced. All attendees are required to wear safety masks.

Pastors and their dedicated parish staff and volunteers will ensure that pews and all areas are sanitized before and after each Mass and that the temperatures of all individuals are taken before proceeding to the pews.

Livestreaming of Masses and loudspeakers may still be utilized for the sake of our brothers and sisters who still opt to follow the Mass from their cars or at home. The dispensation which excuses persons from the obligation to attend Mass still stands at this time because of the pandemic. Catholics who are sick, frail or who are uncomfortable should still stay at home. Pastors who are unable to have indoor Mass for certain reasons have such prerogative.

I thank the Faithful of our island, our clergy, and the many groups and individuals who are selflessly assisting our parishes and schools at this time. We thank our government and health care professionals, most especially those courageous men and women who are caring for our sick and frail in our hospitals and clinics. God bless you.

I look forward to returning to the island very soon. In the meantime, please stay strong in Jesus. His love for each of us is boundless.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+Michael J. Byrnes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Archbishop Michael J. Byrnes  
Metropolitan Archbishop of Agaña