



Bishop George Rajendran SDB
Diocese of Thuckalay

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BISHOP'S HOUSE
P.B. No. 12, Thuckalay P.O.
Kanyakumari District
Tamilnadu – 629175, India
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Diocese Email: thuckalaydiocese@yahoo.com

Ref. No. Priests/GR/121/2021

24 May 2021

Dear Fathers and Sisters,

Greetings from Bishop's House, Thuckalay. We have been discussing in several forums, particularly in the online priests' conference and religious meetings regarding our response to the current and emerging situation in Tamilnadu in general and in the ecclesiastical territory of the Eparchy of Thuckaly.

Covid 19 is spreading rapidly across the nation and especially in the different parts of our diocese. People affected are running from pillar to post to get admitted in the hospitals offering COVID-19 treatments. The current scenario is threatening to endanger the health infrastructure and support facilities.

There are many who have symptoms but are reluctant to avail proper and timely medication, losing confidence in the system and facilities, which in turn can cause very severe damage to health and most often fatal in nature.

Fear among the people has been threatening the mental health. It is high time to reduce the fear and anxiety of the people. At this juncture, we all hold on to a positive mind-set with the hope in the Divine Grace and at the same time strengthening ourselves with two-fold activity – one, support the community to take all preventive steps and two, support the community / families / individuals who are affected by the virus.

There is another aspect to the mental agony due to the loss of means of livelihood. Poor daily wage earners do not have the opportunity for work. Whatever little savings will dry out and gradually they shall be struggling for their meeting their daily basic needs of food. Challenges are plenty.

As a Diocese, we need to come forward to act to ease the burden on the physical and mental health of the members of the Diocese and also the general public in this time of emergency. We do need to complement and supplement the government and various agencies and organisations in ensuring safety and health of all people. As suggested by many, it is important to take concrete steps with to assist the people in this time of need. Let us all put our might together. The current situation with district-wise Covid-19 cases as on May 23, 2021 and the way infection and death are increasing, we need to provide solace.



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Sl. No.	District	Infected	Active
1	Ariyalur	9327	2020
2	Chengalpattu	128677	15540
3	Chennai	481217	49057
4	Coimbatore	138861	31578
5	Cuddalore	43547	7653
6	Dharmapuri	15825	3018
7	Dindigul	23769	3114
8	Erode	43346	11198
9	Kallakurichi	18255	3374
10	Kancheepuram	57469	7143
11	Kanyakumari	40752	11339
12	Karur	13815	2203
13	Krishnagiri	28048	8714
14	Madurai	55726	13091
15	Nagapattinam	23518	4458
16	Namakkal	25637	3950
17	Nilgiris	15216	2846
18	Perambalur	6370	2496
19	Pudukottai	19973	3358

Sl. No.	District	Infected	Active
	Ramanathapuram	14411	3252
21	Ranipet	30808	4017
22	Salem	57016	5683
23	Sivagangai	12665	1605
24	Tenkasi	19341	3870
25	Thanjavur	40123	6355
26	Theni	32000	5711
	Thirupathur	19122	4761
28	Thiruvallur	92536	12126
29	Thiruvannamalai	35485	6221
30	Thiruvarur	24587	4786
31	Thoothukudi	42292	7267
32	Tirunelveli	39794	6352
33	Tiruppur	46927	11504
	Trichy	46762	11143
35	Vellore	38712	4311
36	Villupuram	29310	3476
37	Virudhunagar	31105	5553
	TOTAL	18,42,344	2,94,143

Those marked in dark are the districts under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Thuckalay.

The following are some of the steps that have evolved for implementation under the flagship of Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), the social wing of the Diocese of Thuckalay:

Roles and Responsibilities of Covid-19 Action Team

A. KKSSS

- ✚ To find the Resources for providing maximum support at all levels of volunteerism being exhibited in the Diocese.
- ✚ To procure materials (PPE Kit, Pulse Oximeter, Inhaler, Thermometer etc.) for distribution.
- ✚ To arrange for timely Distribution and Delivery of Medical Kit to Parishes
- ✚ To coordinate with the Forane Vicars for implementation of the action plan
- ✚ To arrange for and to provide training to Diocesan Health Volunteers (Good Samaritan Team, Health Workers, etc.)
- ✚ To arrange for and to ensure vaccination for Good Samaritan Team
- ✚ To conduct Awareness Programs through social media
- ✚ To make available the Ambulance Service to the people in need
- ✚ To identify Committed Doctors/ Nurses for medical advice and consultation



B. FORANE VICAR

- ✚ To identify the most affected parishes in the Forane
- ✚ To collect the data regarding Covid affected families
- ✚ To coordinate with the parish priests and volunteers within the Forane

C. PARISH PRIEST

- ✚ To form parish level volunteers (Youth, Vincent de Paul, and like-minded people for voluntary service)
- ✚ To give awareness and direction to the faithful in the light of this circular letter also regarding seriousness of the situation and whom to contact in time of emergency.
- ✚ To coordinate the volunteers for better and effective means to implement our interventions
- ✚ To make use of the religious sisters in the parish and to provide Medical and Psycho–Sociosupport to the Covid affected families
- ✚ To keep in personal contact with the families electronically
- ✚ To form a parish level helpdesk to ensure that no one goes hungry due to the loss of wages and therefore to make available of provisions and food materials
- ✚ To make arrangements as much as possible for medical assistance to the Covid affected and other patients (heart patients, diabetics, dialysis patients etc.)

D. PARISH LEVEL VOLUNTEERS

- ✚ To visit the Covid affected families with all the precautions and distribute provisions, food materials and medicines in case of emergency situation
- ✚ To collect data and update to the parish priest

E. RELIGIOUS SISTERS IN THE PARISH

- ✚ To provide Medical and Socio-Psycho support to volunteers and families
- ✚ To orient the volunteers and to monitor their activities
- ✚ To monitor the Covid Positive families
- ✚ To collect daily health status from families
- ✚ To analyse the collected data and information and report to the parish priest
- ✚ To connect families with severe symptoms with Nurse & Doctor for care
- ✚ To give support to all families in the parish
- ✚ To report all activities to parish priests



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F. HEALTH COMMISSION

- ✚ To coordinate all the interventions and activities at the Forane level
- ✚ To provide the right guidance to the sisters
- ✚ To be available for medical consultation and help arrange for expert assistance

G. GOOD SAMARITAN TEAM

- ✚ To arrange for and assist in the funeral of the Covid fatality cases
- ✚ To assist the parish priest for the funeral

H. COUNSELLING TEAM

- ✚ To provide Tele-Counselling for Covid patients, elderly, youth, children and to the needy
- ✚ To provide Psycho - Social support to the needy

I. DOCTORS

- ✚ To direct the patients with severe medical conditions to avail expert medical advice and hospitalisation
- ✚ To providing medical consultation and advice

J. Diocesan Level Volunteer Team and their Phone Numbers

a. Doctors

- ✚ Dr. Vivekanandan - 9486177898
- ✚ Dr. Betty - 9489809357
- ✚ Dr. Vijay Sundhar - 9095397629

b. Home Care Consultation – Forane Level In-charge (Consultation time: 9am to 4pm)

- ✚ Manjalumoodu Forane: Sr. Dayana SDS - 7273525986
- ✚ Nithiravilai Forane: Sr. Tessaria ASMI - 8925688992
- ✚ Thuckalay Pilankalai Forane: Sr. Emily CMC - 9385507815
- ✚ Arukani – Kaliyal Foranes: Sr. Vinitha FCC - 8848322027
- ✚ Soosaipuram Forane: Sr. Vinitha SABS - 7598987838 (Thirunelveli)
- ✚ Padanthalumoodu forane: Sr. Libiya CMC - 8438228410
- ✚ Thenkasi Mission: Sr. Helency DHS - 9037459357 (Thenkasi)



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c. Covid Care Tele counselling (Consultation time: 9.30am to 4pm)

✚ Dr. Fr. Jimmy	- 9495504993
✚ Sr. Ann Maria FCC	- 8903351965
✚ Sr. Rosia FCC	- 9442278919
✚ Sr. Ancil FCC	- 7598525899
✚ Sr. Reeja CMC	- 9487092941
✚ Sr. Lizy Jose FCC	- 9786551308
✚ Sr. Josea SDS	- 9626843731
✚ Sr. Ancy Valiyakulam SABS	- 8110903797

d. Good Samaritan Team

✚ Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil	- 9884561965
✚ Fr. Johnslal Arackaparambil	- 9487084904
✚ Fr. Alex Puthett	- 9047508203`
✚ Fr. Dency Mundunadakkal	- 9940754903
✚ Fr. Ajeesh Attiyil	- 9443778014
✚ Fr. Vinod Kanakkalil	- 9444328798
✚ Fr. Jose Vayalil	- 9496801436
✚ Fr. Jomon Mangalamadathil	- 9442011269
✚ Fr. Mijo Puthenpurayil	- 9487084905
✚ Fr. Printo Kurias	- 9443784772
✚ Fr. Vinu D Joseph	- 9487538657
✚ Fr. Jimmy	- 9495504993
✚ Fr. Anto CMI	- 9544849947
✚ Dn. Mahesh	- 9843375019

e. Ambulance Service

✚ Mr. Anish	- 9150104185
✚ Mr. Jiju	- 9629384531

If you have any doubt or query, do not hesitate to contact Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil, Director, Kanyakumari Social Service Society. (Ph. 9884561965, 7708726043)



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Church Funeral of Persons who die during these days of Pandemic and Lockdown

Having consulted various reliable sources, the following recommendation for funeral / burial of persons in our Diocese during these days of pandemic and lockdown:

1. If a patient dies in the hospital, the hospital will give a death statement.
2. If a patient dies at home, the family members may not disclose it as COVID death or they may not be eager to get a death statement.
3. From our part, the wise action would be to treat every death as COVID and take necessary precaution for the health of not only the priests in the parish but also for the faithful who may attend the funeral / burial service.
4. The Diocese may not be in a position to direct the parish priests to demand for the death certificate for the burial, knowing the current situation of distress and panic.
5. It is advisable that the parish priest takes step to bring the death (taken place at home) to the notice of the health department.
6. The situation in every parish is different and hence the parish priest is the right person to use his pastoral prudence, having assessed well the individual case of death and the overall situation of the parish.
7. This calls for our follow up on every patient and his / her health condition.
8. Above all, we are called to provide adequate awareness to our people well in advance which will help us avoid lot of problems. Let me suggest the following:
 - a. Hiding a Covid positive death is a social crime and it opens the possibility of spreading the disease to many people who gather for the funeral / burial services.
 - b. Give them the assurance that at any case either positive or negative the priest will come and undertake a decent and ecclesial funeral / burial of the deceased.
 - c. Before demanding the death certificate at the time of funeral / burial, inform them that it takes one day to get the test results and if they are ready to wait, and if the family demands for earlier funeral / burial, tell them to strictly follow the standard operating



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procedure of the government restricting the number of participants, wearing of PPE, wearing of mask, maintenance of social distancing, etc.

The above mentioned points are some suggestions we can follow in our pastoral ministry during these days.

Please be assured of continuous prayers for the health and welfare of all the priests and religious and the volunteering teams and the faithful and friends of the Diocese.

May God continue to protect us,

Yours in Christ,

+George Rajendran SDB
Bishop of Thuckalay

