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## **Covid-19 coronavirus: Slovakia, bishops' conference on cancellation of public church services, “there is no time for cheap heroism”**

(Bratislava) - Although Slovakia is currently one of the countries least affected by Covid-19 in Europe (84 people tested positive), the government has taken several very strict preventive measures. These include the cancellation of holy masses, liturgies and other ecclesial services for two weeks with a possible extension. This situation has caused a wave of protests not only among the faithful but also among the clergy. Many priests have turned to the Bishops' Conference voicing their concern, questions and disagreement, perhaps because many of these preventive measures ordered by the government seemed too strict. In addition to the Catholic Church's official declaration, which includes a detailed explanation, the spokesman for the Bishops' Conference, Fr. Martin Kramara, has decided to address a personal letter to his “brothers in the priesthood”. He explains how difficult it was for all the prelates to accept the government's decision to cease all public Eucharistic celebrations, remembering the fact that many representatives of the clergy have persevered in their priestly mission in the past even despite the communist oppression. But this time, the letter reads, the situation is different. Today, nobody fears secular power, because nobody intends to attack the Church... The key to obedience is life and the health of people, and this ultimate interest inspired the Bishops' painful decision to accept the government's recommendation. “We don't want to abandon our believers... but not listening to the State in this situation would be cheap heroism”, the letter reads. Fr. Kramara explains that the crisis offers an opportunity to realize how precious and important the sacrament of the Eucharist is: “Let's use this opportunity, although unwanted, to lead people to God. Let's look for new means and ways – streaming, social media, modern technologies. Let's see all this in a spirit of responsibility for people”.

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