
Coronavirus Covid-19: Netherlands, celebrations without devotees and streaming of liturgies. Churches open “to pray and light a candle”

The Dutch Bishops are enforcing new measures to adhere to the restrictions laid down by the government led by Mark Rutte to prevent the coronavirus spreading, and in a message they announce that “all public liturgical celebrations, including those held on weekdays in small groups, will be cancelled throughout Easter period, up to and including Whit Sunday (31st May)”. One of the new measures enforced by the government is actually a ban on any meeting of more than three people until 1st June. Weekday celebrations had been admitted so far, while those held on holidays had already been cancelled. Now, celebrations can only be held “with as few ministers as possible and without any other believers around”, but the churches will stay open for individual visitors “to pray, light a candle, donate something to the food bank”. Eucharistic celebrations are available, though, on the web channels of the Bishops’ Conference, and some dioceses are streaming their celebrations. According to the figures of the National Health Institute, 4,749 people tested positive and 34 people had died of the virus in Holland as of 23rd March.

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