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## **Netherlands: pandemic situation still critical, no relaxation of restrictions for Easter. Bishops, situation “requires discipline and patience”**

“The crisis generated by the coronavirus is severe for all of us, both in society and in the Church. It requires discipline, patience and resilience on our part. With his death and resurrection, Jesus conquered death: life has the last word. There is hope. At this time which requires sacrifices from us, we should keep our hope alive, drawing on our faith and in mutual love”, the Dutch Bishops said in a statement about the Holy Week and Easter celebrations. Since the situation remains “critical” and there is no relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions in the country, religious communities, too, “cannot ease measures for Easter”. Restricted seating and seat booking will still be in place, no choir singing, no singing from the assembly, only a cantor will be allowed, accompanied by up to four persons, and the use of masks will remain mandatory. With the curfew beginning at 10pm, the start times of the Paschal Triduum celebrations are anticipated so that believers can return home in time. “This means that the Easter Vigil will have to start before dusk”. “The Bishops know that this year, like last year, the Easter celebration will be different than usual”, but they ask that it be celebrated anyway. A dedicated website [www.vierpasen.nl](http://www.vierpasen.nl), launched on Ash Wednesday, is also available with “links and downloads to live and celebrate the Holy Week and Easter at home”.

Valentina Bombelli