



The Titular Roman Catholic Archbishop of Singapore
Office for Catechesis
2 Highland Road,
#02-02 Catholic Archdiocesan Education Centre
Singapore 549102

RESUMING CATECHETICAL SESSIONS ONLINE FROM 7th/8th MARCH ONWARDS

Dear Parish Priests & Catechetical Coordinators,

Peace be with you.

In our previous communication on 17 February, we encouraged parishes to resume catechetical sessions on the weekend of 7/8 March using online video conferencing platforms. We conducted 2 webinars "Using Online Platform for Catechesis" on 21 February, to train parish coordinators and catechists on how to use the Zoom platform, both on the technical capabilities of the system as well as examples of how a catechetical session can be adapted for online use. We hope that those who attended the webinar, would then go and train the rest of the catechists in the parishes.

With the speculation rife as to when our Bishop might announce the resumption of Masses, there have also been questions on whether catechetical sessions would be resuming in the parishes. On consultation with the Bishop, it was decided that **e-Catechetical Sessions would be conducted online from 7/8th March onwards**. This would give the parishes a few weeks to get used to the new procedures of temperature screening, contact tracing and sanitizing for the Masses, without the additional complications of doing the same for the catechetical sessions.

Even if the COVID-19 situation does improve in the next few weeks, we would like the e-Catechetical sessions to be done **at least up till 11/12th April (Easter)**, so that in these 6 weeks our catechists, parents and candidates can become familiar with using online platforms to continue catechesis. This is to prepare for similar future possibilities like virus outbreaks or when the PSI/AQI reach levels where it is inadvisable for face to face meetings. We hope to use this as an opportunity for catechists to explore other options deeply during this Lent whilst we await the restoration to normalcy.

As to when face to face catechetical sessions can be resumed in the parishes, it would depend on the assessment of the development of COVID-19 situation worldwide. Our Bishop, in consultation with his team of experts, will determine **when it is safe to resume catechetical sessions in the parish. Our office will then inform you and provide you with the guidelines on the necessary precautions to be taken.**

In the meantime, we recommend that Catechetical Coordinators take this time to discuss with your Parish Priests on the use of online video conferencing platforms to conduct e-Catechetical Sessions. Our office has experimented with the Zoom platform, and has found that it suits the needs for online catechesis. It is quite simple to learn, its interface simple, and has functions for interaction as well as breakout groups for sharings. The free version limits the session length to 40 minutes, so you might want to consider obtaining monthly licenses for the parish, depending on how many concurrent sessions are being conducted at the same time.

Also, we would highly encourage that you meet your fellow catechists in small groups to conduct online practice sessions as well as practice hosting sessions to familiarise yourselves with the functions. By doing so, catechists will become more comfortable with the features available and will be able to guide and pass this valuable knowledge to your parish community as well.

Please feel free to reach out to us if you require any further assistance on this matter.

God Bless,

Fr Terence Kesavan
Catechetical Director
Office for Catechesis
Archdiocese of Singapore

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