

# Sri Lankan churches halt services as third wave of COVID-19 hits

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (CNS) – Sri Lankan churches once again have halted services, church weddings and Sunday schools due to a third wave of COVID-19 infections.

Ucanews.com reported universities, schools and pre-schools have closed until further notice. All funerals have been limited to 25 people in attendance.

A Catholic priest from the Archdiocese of Colombo said doctors were predicting there would soon be a shortage of oxygen in the country, where the number of cases tripled within days.

“Every family should recite the rosary to save us from this dangerous situation,” said the priest, who asked that his name not be used. “This is especially the month we recite the rosary for Mother Mary.

“Politicians thought of their families rather than the people,” he added. “Everyone should work hard to save the country from becoming like India.”

Hospital sources told ucanews.com that beds in many hospitals and treatment centers were almost full due to the hike in the number of COVID-19 patients.

Samanthi Niroshani, a Sunday school teacher from Seeduwa, said all church services, Sunday schools and other programs there were suspended due to the deteriorating situation.

“The presence of corona patients at home increases the risk of contracting the virus among families, the elderly and those suffering from other diseases,” Niroshani said. “We appealed to Sunday school children to recite the Rosary with their

families to save our country and all from this most unfortunate situation.”

Christ the King Church in Colombo announced on social media that all Church services would be suspended until further notice, while St. Sebastian Church in Gampaha canceled Sunday and weekday Masses.

Niroshani note that the 2019 Easter bombings did not allow people to participate in community activities for months, and churches were closed.

Health authorities analyzing the spike blamed the government for allowing Sinhala and Tamil New Year festivities to go ahead in mid-April. Doctors warned that COVID-19 cases would increase after the festivals, but the government ignored the warning.

Upul Rohana of the Association of Public Health Inspectors said the capacity of its laboratory is being exceeded.

“It is a very serious situation,” he said, adding that some patients have died at home due to a lack of ambulances to take them to hospitals.