

Announcement

September 22, 2021

FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL CONGREGATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

1. **Alarming Increase of COVID-19 Infections:** We certainly appreciate the reminders from the recent *Governing Body Update #7* about maintaining peace and unity, and quickly following direction coming from Jehovah's channel. To reinforce the timely points in that update, we find it necessary to inform you of our deep concern about the alarming increase of COVID-19 cases and deaths among our brothers in the Philippines, especially for the past few months. Within the month of August 2021 alone, 2,659 new cases were reported, which is over 360 percent higher than the previous month, and 208 deaths, which is a 310 percent increase compared to the previous month. This brings us to a total of 7,193 COVID-19 cases and 508 deaths among our brothers and sisters as of September 17, 2021. These figures indicate that the ratio of deaths among the brothers is even higher than among the general population. This situation gives us every reason to act with greater respect for life and health.

2. **Intensifying our Safety Precautions:** With the rapid spread of highly contagious COVID-19 variants, we are stressing the directions in our letter April 5, 2020, where it mentions: "In all cases it is best to limit any activity outside your home to only essential matters that affect the life of you or those in your household...While challenging, it should be taken seriously and applies to all interaction with everyone outside of one's home." Moreover, the April 2021 *Announcements and Reminders* stated: "When making decisions about personal activities such as socializing in person, traveling, and so forth, we want to be more cautious than the secular authorities and our neighbors, who are often eager to resume activities for economic reasons." **Whatever essential personal matters you care for that require you to come in contact with the public, we strongly encourage you to intensify taking safety precautions at all times.** This includes wearing face coverings, maintaining physical distancing, and washing hands regularly.

3. In this critical situation, we strongly urge you to remember the principle stated at 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Let the one who thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." Although we personally may have avoided being infected with the virus, we must not become complacent.