Virus Outbreak

No handshakes

Viral outbreak ‘spooks’ place of worship

MUNDA, Philippines: Friday, Feb 14, 2020 | AP

The few hundred worshippers who showed up, some in protective masks, have been asked to refrain from shaking or holding others’ hands in prayers to prevent the spread of the virus that started in China.

In Hong Kong, Cardinal Hon Tong, wearing a mask, announced the suspension of public Masses for two weeks and the cancellation of Good Friday services for three days, starting Saturday. He said church-goers are to watch them online.

In Japan, where Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines are tourist destinations, a sharp decline in the number of foreign visitors has been a palpable setback. At noon, three kingfishers and a pair of swallows hung out in the front of the bus.

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In Hong Kong, Cardinal Hon Tong said for the first time, half empty pews were seen during a Mass at the Minor Basilica of San Lorenzo Ruiz in Macau.

In a popular Catholic Church in Manila, nearly half of the pews were empty for Sunday Mass. The few hundred worshippers who showed up, some in protective masks, have been asked to refrain from shaking or holding others’ hands in prayers.

In the city, the two countries concern cooperation in different fields such as training, trade, transport and infrastructure.

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