

# Diocese of Takamatsu

カトリック高松司教区

〒760-0074

香川県高松市桜町1-8-9

E-mail: catholic-takamatsu@takamatsu.catholic.ne.jp

電話 087-831-6659 FAX 087-833-1484

Catholic Diocese of Takamatsu

Prot.No. 28/20



Chancery Office

Catholic Diocese of Takamatsu

Sakuramachi 1-8-9,

Takamatsu-shi, 760-0074

Kagawa-ken, Japan.

E-mail: catholic-takamatsu@takamatsu.catholic.ne.jp

TEL.087-831-6659 FAX.087-833-1484

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Bishop of the Diocese of Takamatsu  
Apostle John – Eijiro Suwa

† The peace of our Lord be with you.

In accordance with the government's "declaration of an emergency," we would like to issue the following notice: "The Diocese of Takamatsu will refrain from having public Masses in individual parishes. This order will stay in place until the 'declaration of an emergency' has been lifted." Regarding this declaration that was originally expected to be lifted on May 6<sup>th</sup>, the government has officially decided to extend it until May 31 nationwide. In order to prevent the spread of the corona virus infection, the people of Japan are strongly urged to refrain from leaving their homes. The influence of these measures has already affected the economic activities around us. But, normal social activities have also been affected. We, the Catholic Church, share in this social responsibility and awareness of restricted actions. However, there has been a big impact on the activities of the church, to include the practice of faith. Therefore, based on this extension, we would like to request the following of the people of each of the parishes.

## I. Concerning Masses that are closed to the public. Please continue the current way of practicing our faith.

It is a basic blessing and joy for the congregation to attend Mass and share in the Holy Eucharist on Sundays. Although restricting us from being able to do this is an ultimate sacrifice, albeit in order to cooperate with the controls to prevent the spread of this infection, we also want to come together to share in Communion. However, we ask that you please refrain from gathering on Sundays and sharing in the Mass. Priests will still dedicate Masses for parishioners at regular times on Sundays. So, we ask that you please remember your priest and have your heart in the same space, and if possible, keep this time holy with your family. You can enthusiastically deepen your relationship with God through meditation, using the liturgy of the day. The pamphlets that contain the liturgy for each Sunday Mass will be kept in the entranceway of your local church. So, you can feel free to come and get a copy and take it home. You can also find Mass being broadcast on the Internet.

## II. The Sacrament of Penance and Eucharistic Adoration: Highly recommended.

We do not want large numbers of people to gather, but we strongly recommend visiting churches either individually or in small numbers to pray and worship in front of the Eucharist. It is not necessary to refrain from contacting your local priest in order to make a confession or accept Communion personally. As for study sessions, individual priests will judge the situation. Just remember that it is necessary to follow standard practices of personal protection. For example, you should wear a mask and limit the number of people who gather, while at the same time making a record of the persons gathering, along with their emergency contact information. The number of people should also be kept at a minimum of about 10 persons or fewer.

## III. Properly using and maintaining Internet connectivity: This cannot be avoided.

Not only in churches, but also in several areas of society in Japan, such as industry and education, the use of the Internet is an inevitable means to deal with the limitations placed on us by the corona virus. Up to this point, the diocese has prioritized the consideration of people who cannot use the Internet, and has merely used the Internet as a supplement. We now have no choice but to think about means to carry out mutual communication. Specifically, the diocese conferences will use Zoom to replace the need for people to commute. Moreover, we will use the homepage and email for expedited communication. This will also save us time and money.

## IV. Protecting our connections as a church family: Work hard to keep the connection in your hearts.

We are now forced to create an environment where there are no human encounters, by having closed Masses and using only the Internet to communicate. But we are a family. These measures that we are taking to prevent the spread of the corona virus, such as not going out, are actually isolating many elderly people, and others who live alone. Each parish has many people who are easily isolated. Please stay in contact with these people by phone, fax, letters, etc. Normal social manners prevent us from doing this in typical situations, but we urge you to go one step further to make and maintain a family connection with those who are not able to make any contact with others.

## V. Church maintenance fees and donations.

Since there have been limitations on going out, including going to Sunday Masses, it has not been possible for many people to make their regular donations to the church. Because of the corona virus, many people are afflicted deeply with financial hardships, which we feel in our hearts. However, the church is also going through a very difficult situation. Each parish is working to do all that they can, but we ask that even if you cannot attend church regularly, that you might be able to make a tribute to God and prepare donations or maintenance fee costs, regardless of the amount. On one hand, we are saving money because we are

unable to hold meetings and conduct other activities in the church. This is helpful in one respect, but paying fixed costs is inevitable. The diocese has been operating in the red even in normal years, and it is expected that the operation of each parish will be quite difficult this year. We always have to spend money, so we ask you to please do what you can and not delay and can give to your local priest, or drop a donation into the box at the church.

While it is unfortunate that we cannot have Mass together or participate in other church activities, we can always find meaning in these times, and it will be an opportunity for our growth. Let us offer prayers for unity without forgetting proper consideration for those who are in trouble or suffering from the corona virus. May this scourge turn into good fortune not only for the church, but also the world.

Once again, I pray for the Lord's rich healing and blessings upon each one of you.