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Kyo.Prot.N.82/2020

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To my Sisters and Brothers in the Kyoto Diocese

Measures for Resuming Church Activities Such as Mass During the New Coronavirus Pandemic (No. 7)

The Measures (No. 6) issued on July 7, 2020, laid out criteria for resuming Masses and other gatherings in the Kyoto Diocese.

Based upon the situation from July to September and the opinion of experts, as of Thursday, October 1, Masses and other parish activities may resume depending upon the situation in each block and provided that the following infection prevention measures are observed.

Infection prevention measures

- ① Obey the "Requirements to be met for gatherings such as Masses" (Kyo.Prot.N. 56/2020), including thoroughly disinfecting the hands of priests, other ministers, and the congregation, especially before the distribution of Holy Communion.
- ② Keep a list of participants.
Mass may not be celebrated unless all the required conditions are fully met.
- ③ Many churches have a limit on the number of people who can attend. Therefore, please do not attempt to participate in Masses in any church other than your own.
- ④ For the time being, please refrain from singing together at Masses and meetings. It is possible to play the organ, sing solo at a distance, and sing with a small group such as a choir but only if there is sufficient space for proper distancing.
- ⑤ The elderly and those with chronic health problems are at high risk of becoming seriously infected, so it is recommended that those who are worried about their health, those who are not in good physical condition, or those who are worried about going out pray at home.
- ⑥ Until further notice, the faithful in the Diocese of Kyoto are dispensed from the obligation to participate in Mass on Sundays.

The nationwide spread of the infection from July, the so-called second wave, has not completely settled, but other dioceses other than the Kyoto Diocese has implemented preventive measures and fortunately there have been no reported cases of outbreaks based in Catholic churches. Infections seem to occur in waves, and there is a possibility that the infection will spread again in the coming autumn and winter. In the meantime, the diocese of Kyoto will resume activities such as Masses on the condition that infection prevention measures be properly implemented.

We will continue to give priority to protecting lives and safety, and so if the national or the local government in any block of the Kyoto Diocese declares an emergency or requests a stop to activities we will again suspend Masses and other activities.

✠ Paul Yoshinao Otsuka
Bishop of Kyoto