

CATHOLIC KYOTO DIOCESE

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STEPS TAKEN BY THE KYOTO DIOCESE REGARDING NEW CORONAVIRUS (NO. 10) SUSPENSION OF MASSES IN KYOTO, NARA, SHIGA AND MIE

Dear Brother and Sister Catholics in the Kyoto Diocese:

As we enter the New Year, there has been an explosive increase in new coronavirus infections nationwide.

The national government declared a state of emergency for the Tokyo metropolitan area (Tokyo and three neighboring prefectures) from January 8. The number of newly infected people is rapidly increasing and the situation at medical institutions is deteriorating in Kyoto, Nara, Shiga, and Mie prefectures of the Kyoto diocese, as well as in the Kansai area of Osaka, Hyogo, and Wakayama prefectures of the Osaka Archdiocese.

Therefore, I ask that all public Masses in all blocks of the Kyoto Diocese be suspended for the time being in accord with local governments' countermeasures against the coronavirus.

Also, to reduce the flow of people, please refrain from holding face-to-face activities (meetings, etc.) other than Mass. Instead, use the telephone, email, internet meetings, etc. as much as possible.

* The priest coordinator of each block should consider the alert level (or phase) of the prefecture in evaluating the Mass suspension. In any case, the suspension in the four southern blocks of the diocese announced in Bulletin Number 9 is extended.

* Please review and thoroughly implement the infection countermeasures in place in the parish.

* Priests should take care not to impose on a small number of parishioners for such activities as staffing the reception area for Mass or disinfection. If the necessary ministers are not available Mass should be cancelled.

The resumption of public Masses will depend upon the alert level in each area and can take place as the level in each prefecture is relaxed. In the meantime, the diocese will pay close attention to the virus situation.

Please understand that these measures are for the protection of all and in solidarity with our healthcare professionals.

I pray for the safety and good health of you all. Please take care of yourselves.

✠Paul Yoshinao Otsuka
Bishop of Kyoto