

June 18, 2021

To All the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Osaka

Thomas Aquinas Maeda Cardinal Mayo
Archbishop of OsakaOn Pre-Cautionary Measures against the spread of the New Corona Virus (COVID-19)
Infection (PART 13)

+ The Peace of the Lord

The Church is a gathering of God's people where priests, religious and lay people walk together for the building of the Kingdom of God. The spread of the new coronavirus infection is coming to a halt, but it will take some time before it is brought to an end by the spread of vaccines and other measures. Therefore, it will probably take some time before we can return to a normal life of faith where everyone gathers in church. In the meantime, as the self-restraint measures are lifted in different stages, let's keep our awareness with the new lifestyle that Japanese society as a whole is working on.

The emergency declaration issued for Osaka and Hyogo prefectures will be lifted on June 21, and measures to prevent the spread of the disease will continue. When guidelines are announced by the relevant local governments, please follow them in principle.

The Diocese of Osaka has lifted the suspension of public Masses, but as the local circumstances and the size and composition of the congregation greatly varies from parish to parish, religious houses to religious houses, and facility to facility, the person-in charge should make the final decision on the form of public Masses according to the circumstances.

For details, please refer to the following measures:

1. For Sunday Masses at parishes
 - a. Please follow the basic measures (hand sanitization, wearing of mask, ventilation, knowing who to contact, no singing, refrain from vocalizing, sit at least 2 meters away if possible, and take temperature when entering the church).
 - b. The mass celebrant and the other ministers should also wear masks during the Mass. However, for the sake of the hearing impaired or the elderly, if the lectern is more than two meters away from the congregation, the celebrant may not wear masks during the homily.
 - c. The obligation to attend Sunday Mass is exempted for all parishioners, so please make your own decision whether or not to attend Mass. Please note that if your parish does not have a public Mass, please do not go to other parishes to attend Mass.
 - d. If, for various reasons, it is not possible to take thorough measures (including not only physical aspects but also excessive burden on the staffs in taking measures), or if there are circumstances in each location, please cancel the

public Mass. In such cases, since the priest "has the duty to offer Mass for the people entrusted to him ... on each Lord's Day" (Church Law, Article 535, Paragraph 1), please offer Mass privately for the parishioners. We also ask that you make every effort to ensure that the grace of the Sunday liturgy reaches the faithful in some form (online distribution, correspondence, etc.).

- e. If a parish's Sunday public Mass is to be cancelled, the responsible priest must inform the block moderator, the district coordinator, and the archdiocesan curia. You can also contact the diocesan office by e-mail. Please inform the Osaka Diocesan Pastoral Information [pastor-info@osaka.catholic.jp].
2. As long as precautionary measures are taken, Masses may be celebrated at monasteries or facilities other than your parish, as well as Weekday Masses at your parish. The person-in-charge may decide whether to celebrate these Masses.
3. If a gathering other than Mass is necessary, please limit it to a small number of people, refrain from eating and drinking, and take all possible measures to prevent infection.

Remember that anyone can become infected, or may already be infected. At the same time, let's not lose faith and hope in any situation, and let's be mindful of the vulnerable people who need more care.

*Versions of this Notice in major foreign languages will be posted on the website as they become available.