

April 17, 2020

Dear Catholic Sendai Diocesan Parishioners,

Precautionary Measures Concerning COVID-19 from 2nd of May and Beyond

Infections due to COVID-19 continue to spread. Last March 27, the reported number of infected cases in the four prefectures of Sendai Diocese was more than 10 people and recently, as of April 15, over 160 people have been infected. The number of people tested positive all over Japan has nearly reached 10,000 cases and it's increasing. Due to the current situation, we have decided to extend the following precautionary measures from 2nd of May and beyond, so please be guided:

1. **From May 2nd (Saturday) to June 6th (Saturday)**, all parishioners of Sendai Diocese are dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass for the time being. Likewise, all public masses, gatherings, lectures, etc. with unspecified number of people attending will also be suspended.
 - ✧ It has been reported that in some small churches the Holy Mass is offered because of few attendees. Apparently, the prayer and communion service (which has a minimum risk of infection) has strengthened and deepened the faith of the believers and not only the Holy Mass (which has longer confinement and high risk of infection).
2. **The priest will continue to give communion** to those who wish to receive it in their respective parishes during scheduled Sunday Masses. However, please pay careful attention to the following:
 - ✧ The giving of communion is usually done during the regular schedule of masses in the different churches. **To avoid congestion inside the church, try to find some ways and means to observe social distancing.**
 - ✧ Please do not stay long inside the church. Return to your home as soon as you receive the communion.
3. **Concerning weddings and funerals**, consult with the priest in charge and the person concern on taking adequate precautionary measures against infections before proceeding as usual.
4. **For events other than masses**, as much as possible, kindly consider postponing or canceling them, except only for small gatherings. In case of holding such events, in addition to hand disinfection, kindly provide sufficient ventilation, keep a distance between each other, and try to finish as quickly as possible.
5. We hope that this announcement will be given to the parishioners in various ways by **Friday, May 1st**. Likewise, inform the foreign parishioners as much as possible.
6. The **"Prayer for Protection from Coronavirus"** has been made into a card. We will send you enough copies, so please use it in your prayer. If you need more, please contact the office of the parish.

✧ The decision was made after a thorough reflection and discussion during the clergy meeting last April 14th. Nevertheless, we will make an announcement again in the middle of May after taking into considerations the situation and advices from experts.

Fr. Shiro Komatsu
Administrator
Catholic Sendai Diocese