

April 1, 2020

To all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Osaka,

**On precautionary measures against
the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infection (V)**

+ Peace of Christ!

I had planned to resume the public celebration of Masses from April 9 with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. However, in light of the current situation, I have decided to adopt the following measures:

1. The suspension of public Masses in the Archdiocese of Osaka will remain in effect for the rest of April. I will announce new directives for May around April 23 Thursday.
2. Postpone or cancel as much as possible other church-related events, meetings, and seminars.
3. The decision to administer the sacraments (Baptism, Holy Communion, Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick) is left to the discretion of parish priests.
4. The celebration of funerals and marriages are permitted provided that all necessary precautionary measures are taken to avoid infection.
5. The Sunday Mass Obligation is dispensed for all the faithful in the Archdiocese of Osaka while the suspension of the public celebration of Masses lasts. I ask each faithful to do the Mass Readings for the day and privately offer prayers at home such as by praying the Rosary.
6. The Archdiocese of Osaka is planning to live-stream the liturgical celebration of the Holy Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil). Details will be announced later. I understand that the Archdiocese of Tokyo will continue to broadcast Sunday Masses online.
7. To priests: you may celebrate the liturgies of the Holy Triduum privately in the following manner, in accordance with the decree issued on March 19 by the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments:
 - a) Parish priests can celebrate the liturgical mysteries of the Paschal Triduum even without the physical presence of the faithful. Please preside the liturgies following the general instructions of the *Roman Missal* even without the participation of the congregation.
 - b) **Holy Thursday.** Parish priests can concelebrate the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. The faculty to celebrate Mass on this day in a suitable place, without the people, is granted in an exceptional manner to all priests for this year only. The

procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose at the end of the Mass is to be omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray the Vespers of the day (cf. *Liturgia Honorarum*).

- c) **Good Friday.** In parish churches, where and in the measure that there is a real possibility of doing so, established by the one responsible, Parish Priest will celebrate the Passion of the Lord. In the Solemn Universal Prayer, the following prayer intention will be added (This can be downloaded from the website of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan):

For the world suffering from the spread of novel coronavirus

Deacon: Let us pray also for the world suffering from the novel coronavirus pandemic. May the Lord comfort those who suffer, and free us all from the fear and anxiety we experience in the face of this disease.

(Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:)

Celebrant: Almighty ever-living God, who is the source of our hope, we ask you for the healing of those affected by the novel coronavirus and the protection of those who work to care for the sick from contagion. Welcome into your eternal kingdom, our departed brothers and sisters. May we, assured of your Presence among us, restore hope to the world now filled with anxiety and confusion. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- d) **The Easter Vigil.** At "The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium," the preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted; the Paschal Candle is lit; the procession is omitted; and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) follows. The "Liturgy of the Word" then takes place. For the "Baptismal Liturgy," the "Renewal of Baptismal Promises" alone is necessary (cf. *Missale Romanum*, p. 371, n. 55). The "Liturgy of the Eucharist" then follows. Those who have absolutely no possibility of uniting themselves to the Paschal Vigil celebrated in a church should pray the Office of Readings for Easter Sunday (cf. *Liturgia Honorarum*).

I ask you to circulate the directive as widely as possible to all the faithful including those from overseas. This directive in other languages will be published on the Archdiocesan website.

It is indeed painful that we are unable to celebrate together as parish communities, the liturgical mysteries of Holy Week, the very summit of the whole liturgical calendar which commemorate the Redemption and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It must also be a very trying experience for the catechumens preparing for their Baptism this Easter, who are unable to celebrate the rite of reception into the Church with their parish communities. Let us support each other with prayer.

My thoughts also go out to the priests and religious who must move to their newly appointed posts after Easter without having the opportunity to greet their old/new communities in the usual manner. Let me take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude for your previous mission and be assured of my prayer for your success at your new posts.

Let us pray for those infected with novel coronavirus, the healthcare workers, for those who labor to tend to the spiritual needs of the faithful at this time, and for the eternal rest for all those who died from the virus. During this Holy Week, let us pray intensely to the Lord for the swift end to this calamity.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Thomas Aquinas Manyo Cardinal Maeda
Archbishop of Osaka