

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> ADVISORY LETTER ON NOVEL CORONA VIRUS INFECTIONS**

**Re: Suspension of Public Masses**  
**due to the Spread of Novel Corona Virus Infections**

The Right Reverend Mario Michiaki Yamanouchi, Bishop of Saitama

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Saitama:

With the current situation of the spread of novel corona virus infections, it is considered that the next one or two weeks will be crucial for preventing the further spread of the infections; thus, we are now advised to refrain from holding gatherings or events with unspecified numbers of people.

Responding to the seriousness of the present situation, alongside with the Archdiocese of Tokyo and the Diocese of Sapporo, we, too, have decided to issue the following measures, and we ask all of you to observe them.

1: In general, Public masses between February 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) and March 14<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) will be suspended, including the Sunday masses during the time.

2: For the Sundays, March 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, all the faithful in the Diocese of Saitama will be exempted from their obligations to attend Sunday masses. We, however, recommend you may have time to spare for reading the Bible and offer your prayers daily.

3: Weekday masses in the same period above will also be suspended, except for the cases with only limited number of participants.

4: Weddings and funerals can, however, be taken as usual, only after taking measures in sufficiency to prevent infections.

5: With regards to the meetings or events other than masses, you are advised to postpone or cancel them, except only for necessary small gatherings. Please, also, refrain from taking events serving food and drinks for the time being.

6: Unless there is a major change in the situation, these safety measures above as an immediate response to the present circumstances will, hopefully, be lifted after two weeks. Before, however, the prescribed period comes to end a decision will be made once again.

It is not easy at all for us, particularly, to make this decision to suspend masses which should be offered daily at the Catholic Church. We, thus, hope that you may understand these decisions made as an emergent response to prevent the further spread of the infection and also the seriousness of the present situation which led to such a difficult decision.

Trusting in God of his mercy and love, as well as thinking of all, let us pray to God our Father, through the intercessions of our blessed Virgin Mary, that He may restore the lives to the full for those who are infected by Novel Corona Virus and take full control of the present situation worldwide.

Yours ever in Christ.