



May 26th, 2020

Most Reverend Mario Michiaki Yamanouchi
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Saitama

Dear my brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Saitama:

**THE 8th LETTER OF THE BISHOP ON THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES
PREVENTING THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS:**

Church Activities after the Lifting of the State of Emergency

As we prepare ourselves for the Solemnity of Pentecost by spending each day praying, “Come, Holy Spirit!”, the state of emergency was fortunately lifted as of May 25th.

However, this does not mean that the threat of the spread of the novel coronavirus is gone; we are still in the midst of the time of trial. While living under the state of emergency, we learned that viruses are not strictly living organisms and cannot reproduce on their own unless they are spread through human-to-human contact. Therefore, we are advised to remember that this coronavirus is still around us and will never go away, and to continue to avoid the "three C's (3密)": closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings for the time being, avoiding unnecessary gatherings and movements, and to be cautious about resuming activities. With this awareness in mind, and with the hope that there will be no recurrence of the spread of the infection, I am making the eighth announcement.

As for the Diocese of Saitama,

We Will Maintain the Status Quo for the Time Being.

Namely:

- Public Masses will continue to be suspended for some time.
- In the meantime, all the faithful of the diocese will continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend the Mass on the Lord's Day.
- We will let you know well in advance when and how public Masses will be resumed.
- In order to avoid the movement of the faithful, public Masses will be resumed at all the parishes together on the same day as in the neighboring Archdiocese of Tokyo.
- The instructions already given on any other church activities than Masses will remain the same.

Please read what was announced in the 7th letter again, and your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

In advance of this announcement, I asked all the priests and deacons in the diocese for their input on how to resume church activities after the state of emergency is lifted. With deep thanks to all of them, I am pleased to report to all the faithful that every one of the priests and deacons made a sincere response without exception.

Let us act prudently, united in the same mind with all people, to prevent a renewed outbreak of the novel coronavirus, and let us pray together so that our church activities may be resumed as soon as possible.

Ave Maria!