

**The 15th LETTER OF THE BISHOP ON THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES
PREVENTING CORONA VIRUS INFECTIONS**

The Right Reverend Mario Yamanouchi, Bishop of Saitama
January 8th, 2021

Re: Responding to the “Emergency Measures” re- issued by the Government.

The “Emergency Measures” were issued again by the Japanese Government yesterday, on January 7th. Until now, we, the Diocese of Saitama, have lived through the preceding difficult time, carefully following the “Guidelines for Preventing the Covid 19 Infections” by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan, issued on November 11th, 2020. It reads that in case the governmental emergency measures or any administrative orders of the restrictions against trading or traveling, the public masses (that is, the masses with the congregation) should be suspended. Following these guidelines, we, the Diocese of Saitama, has now made the following decisions, stated as below. These will be applied to not only Saitama Prefecture, to which the Emergency Measures has been issued, but also to the following three prefectures within our Diocese of Tochigi, Gunma and Ibaraki. It is the important duties entrusted by God for us, the Catholics, to protect the life of everybody. During this time of trial continued, we will try our best, praying each other, as well as working together for God’s sake.

From January 8th, the public masses on Sundays, as well as on weekdays, will be suspended until the time of lifting of the “Emergency Measures” (at this moment, presumably on February 7th).

During the time above, all the faithful of Saitama Diocese will be dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday masses.

All the parish activities or meetings will be cancelled, except the absolute necessary meetings for running or maintaining the parishes.

Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation.