

**The 19th LETTER OF THE BISHOP ON THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES
FOR PREVENTING THE COVID 19 INFECTIONS**

The Right Reverend Mario Yamanouchi, Bishop of Saitama
August 3rd, 2021

**Re: Responding to the “The Emergency Measures”
re-issued by the Government
to Tokyo Metropolitan area with the prefectures of Saitama, Chiba and Kanagawa.**

The Emergency Measures has been re-issued by the Government. We are now facing to the new stages of the spreading of the Covid 19 infections with its new variants. Although the vaccinations for the elderly have progressed, we cannot find any of the decisive signs for the ceasing of the spreading of the virus infections. We are, therefore, expected to do our best continually against the spreading of the virus infections.

Until now, during the time of the State of Emergency, we, the Diocese of Saitama, have basically followed the “Guidelines for Preventing the Covid 19 Infections” by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan, issued on November 11th, 2020, as you can see in my 15th Letter.

However, since the pandemic of the Covid 10 infections began, we have fortunately learnt a lot how to protect our lives against the virus during the pandemic from the efforts and studies by the medical experts.

Therefore, this time during the time with the Emergency Measures, you will be asked to follow the modified measures for the celebrations of the masses with the congregation as below:

- 1. The masses with the congregation on Sundays will be suspended until “The Emergency Measures” will be lifted. This will be applied to the parishes not only in Saitama prefecture, but to those in the prefectures of Tochigi, Gunma and Ibaraki even where the Emergency Measures have not been issued. During the time above, all the faithful of Saitama Diocese will be dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday masses.**

2. **However, the situation of the spreading of the virus infections is quite different from one parish to another. Therefore, if you wish to continue to celebrate the masses with the congregation on Sundays, you may ask the Bishop for his approval only after the careful consideration from the Parish priest with the congregation together.**
3. **Concerning the weekday masses, you will be allowed to celebrate those with the congregation, by strictly following the same precautionary measures as before.**

P.S. As for the measures for the funerals and weddings will be the same as before.

In case you may feel any of difficulties, please do not hesitate to ask the Bishop for his advice.