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DIOCESE OF FUKUOKA

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**COMMUNICATION ON THE MEASURES TO TAKE AFTER
THE DECLARATION OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE PROVINCE OF KUMAMOTO
BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Fukuoka, January 14, 2021

To the priests, religious and laity of the Diocese of Fukuoka

The peace of the Lord be with you all.

Yesterday, after the declaration of a state of emergency by the government of Japan due to the situation of COVID-19 pandemic, I informed you about the suppression of the celebration of the Mass with assistance of the faithful in the province of Fukuoka. Today, the governor of Kumamoto province has decreed, for the same reasons, the state of emergency throughout the province. For this reason, I inform you about the suppression of the celebration of the Mass with attendance of the faithful in all the churches in the province of Kumamoto. Regarding the celebration of the sacraments and other meetings, you should follow the indications of the document of the Episcopal Conference of Japan of November 1, 2020 that I copied in the letter I sent yesterday. However, if there are any special circumstances surrounding the administration of the sacraments, the parish priest can consult directly with the Bishop.

In the province of Saga, although the state of emergency has not been decreed, the situation concerning COVID-19 is worrisome. I ask all the parish priests, in dialogue with the parish councils, to consider the decision they should make. If a state of emergency is also decreed there, they must abide by what was said for Fukuoka and Kumamoto.

It is very painful to have to prohibit the celebration of Mass with the assistance of the faithful, since Mass is the center of the life of the Christian community. After consulting with the members of the Governing Council of the diocese, I am compelled to do so to protect everyone's health. In the Diocese of Fukuoka, we strictly follow the indications offered by the Episcopal Conference of Japan.

I ask for your understanding and support. Fraternaly in Christ,



Josep M. Abella
Bishop of Fukuoka