

Fukuoka, May 8, 2020

## **Official Notice from Catholic Diocese of Fukuoka on Installation Ceremony of Bp. Josep M. Abella**

Dear brothers and sisters in Diocese of Fukuoka,

May the Peace of Christ be with you all. I hope that this letter will find you fine in spite of the state of emergency due to COVID-19 and the continuous suspension of Public Masses. I pray for all the people who are suffering and spending days in anxiety due to the pandemic. I also pray for the persons who are serving and working in various areas in society to protect all life.

We have welcomed Bp. Josep M. Abella to Fukuoka on April 27<sup>th</sup>. He was appointed as a bishop of Fukuoka on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Today, we are happy to announce that the date and details of installation ceremony for Bp. Abella have been finally decided in a council meeting of the Diocese as below. Adding to that, I attach a message regarding the installation ceremony, jointly signed by Bp. Abella and Fr. Sugihara, Apostolic Administrator of the diocese.

### **Installation Ceremony of Bp. Abella**

\* The ceremony will be done with limited number of participants.

**Date and Time: Sunday, 17 May 2020, from 2PM**

**Venue: Cathedral of Fukuoka (Daimyomachi Parish)**

\* We ask all the people of God in the diocese to pray in spiritual communion with those participating in the ceremony. Please refer to the attached document which offers a model of prayer for the occasion.

\* The ceremony/mass will be celebrated with limited number of participants representing the people of God in the diocese. No one, except the representatives, will be allowed to enter into the venue. We ask your understanding for this special way of celebrating it under the situation of pandemic, and please refrain from gathering around the venue.

\* The ceremony will be recorded by video and will be uploaded to the website and YouTube of the diocese. The detail for this will be announced later.

Thank you for your prayers,

Peter Satoru Aoki,  
Chancellor, Diocese of Fukuoka

8 May 2020

Dear brothers and sisters of the Diocese of Fukuoka,

Peace of Christ be with you all.

The season of fresh green has come, and we are celebrating the month of Mother Mary. Meanwhile, due to COVID-19 pandemic, we are constrained to suspend public Masses and stop various Church activities. We are praying for the eternal rest of those who passed away due to COVID-19, and for those who are spending everyday life with great difficulties and insecurity.

Today, we would like to share with you about the meaning and purpose of the Installation Ceremony of the new bishop, which will be celebrated in unusual manner on May 17<sup>th</sup> with limited number of participants due to the pandemic.

1. In the Catholic Church, bishops are appointed by the Holy Father. After listening to the opinion from the concerned diocese and the bishop's conference of the country, the Supreme Pontiff (i.e. Pope) freely appoints bishops (cf. Can. 377). This signifies that a bishop is being sent by the Church like the apostles were chosen and sent by Jesus, and, at the same time, it is a sign of communion with the Universal Church.
2. The newly appointed bishop is welcomed to the Diocesan Community. This is the meaning of the installation ceremony. The new bishop is welcomed to the cathedral, that is the common house for the people of God in a diocese. He is also invited to take the seat of the pastor in the Lord's table around which the community is gathered. The official appointment letter sent by Pope will be read in the ceremony, and the communion with the whole Catholic Church will be acknowledged.
3. After this, the Eucharist will be celebrated together with the new bishop. Joyfully acknowledging the different vocations and charisms of the members of the community, all will be sent to proclaim and witness the Good News.
4. The Installation Ceremony/Mass of Bp. Abella will take place on Sunday May 17<sup>th</sup> at the Cathedral of Fukuoka (Daimyomachi Parish). Normally clergy, religious and laity will come together to welcome the new bishop and to express the will of journey together. Unfortunately, this cannot happen this time since our activities are constrained due to the pandemic, and we cannot predict when the emergency state

will be lifted. Taking this into consideration, we have decided not to postpone the installation ceremony any more. According to Code of Canon Law, it is required to have the installation of the new bishop within the two-months period after his appointment (cf. Can. 382§2).

5. Together with Diocesan Council Members, we have decided to hold the Installation in the following manner:

- a. The ceremony will take place from 2PM on Sunday May 17<sup>th</sup> at the cathedral.
- b. The participants will be limited in number to avoid a crowded environment, and they will represent the people of God of Fukuoka Diocese as follows:
  - Diocesan Council Members
  - Rectors of the Major Seminary in Fukuoka and Fukuoka Collegio
  - Representatives from religious
  - Representatives from laity
  - Representatives from laity coming from other countries
- c. These representatives will welcome the new bishop on behalf of the diocesan community. We would like to ask all the people of God in the diocese to join in prayer from their own houses. Please refer to the attached document for a recommended way of prayer.
- d. Abp. Mitsuaki Takami, Archbishop of Nagasaki, the Metropolitan of the catholic ecclesiastical province of Nagasaki, will participate in the installation. This strengthens the sense of communion with Universal Church.
- e. The ceremony will be recorded by video, and it will be uploaded to the website/YouTube of the diocese.

We ask your generous understanding for the way we will hold the installation in this special situation. Once the pandemic will be overcome, we will organize a thanksgiving mass to which everybody will be invited and in which we will be graced by the presence of all the bishops in Japan. While we cannot tell the exact moment for that, we hope to have it as soon as possible.

May God bless you all abundantly.

Bp. Josep. M. Abella

Rev. Peter Hironobu Sugihara, Apostolic Administrator of Fukuoka