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DIOCESE OF FUKUOKA

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Fukuoka, December 6, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters:

The peace of the Lord be with you all.

We have already started Advent and in all parishes and communities we are preparing the celebration of Christmas. I hope that we can celebrate a Christmas full of peace and hope.

In recent weeks, the situation of COVID-19 has notably improved. In any case, the emergence of new variants of this virus continues to be a concern.

This year we will celebrate Christmas amid this situation. Questions have come from different parishes and communities to the diocesan secretariat about the norms to follow in the celebration of Christmas. We also spoke about this in the presbyteral council of the diocese.

Even knowing that the situation is not the same in all parishes and communities, **I indicate some criteria that can help determine the characteristics of the celebration.**

1. Always complying with the rules that have been given to avoid contagion (use of a mask, disinfect hands, adequate ventilation, etc.) I ask you to see how to accommodate as many people as possible in the celebration. I think that it is possible to increase a little the number of participants in the celebrations. Members of the same family and those who normally share the same house can sit without having to submit to the distance that is required for other people.
2. As for the sinning during the celebrations, it can be entrusted to the choir although the participation of the entire assembly is not excluded when the necessary conditions of space and sufficient ventilation are met. In this case, do not forget to wear the mask.
3. In the Eucharistic celebration there will not be the procession of offerings. Remember that, as long as the COVID-19 restrictions are maintained, you must disinfect your hands before receiving communion.

If there are changes in the situation in relation to COVID-19, comply with the regulations given by the authorities.

I wish you all a joyful celebration of Christmas.



Josep M. Abella, cmf.

Bishop of the diocese of Fukuoka