

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Fukuoka Diocesan Pastoral Plan

Diocesan Pastoral Plan

「キリストの愛に駆り立てられて、人々と共に歩む教会」

1887 Chuo-ku, Fukuoka City
(in the vicinity of the present-day Fukuoka Central Post Office)

1936 Clergy Retreat

1938 View of Daimyo-machi Church

The complex block features a vertical teal bar on the left with the title 'Diocesan Pastoral Plan' and a Japanese quote. The main area is a collage of three historical photographs: a two-story building from 1887, a group of clergy from 1936, and an aerial view of a church from 1938.

To my brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Fukuoka,

The Peace of the Lord be with you.

It is with great pleasure that I present to you this Diocesan Pastoral Plan. I present it to you with my prayer that it will serve to support our journey.

This Diocesan Pastoral Plan is the fruit of efforts that began two years ago. It contains all of our ideas and hopes. I hope that it will provide direction and serve as an important aid to us in our journey.

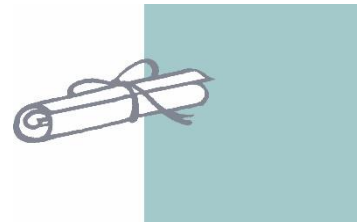
As you surely remember, two years ago I posed the following question to you all: “At this point in time, what is it that the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fukuoka should do in particular to more faithfully live and spread the Gospel?” We received responses from all the parishes and a large number of monasteries, convents and committees. There were also individuals who provided their opinions and proposals. I am very grateful to all of these people. Last September we sent you a summary of all the responses we received. It was a summary of a large number of the proposed ideas, as the Diocesan Pastoral Plan Committee decided not to exclude any of the responses we had received. We then further requested your evaluation of the regarding the issues listed in the draft of the plan, and again we received a large number of responses. With all of these ideas kept firmly in mind, we prepared this final version of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, which is now ready to be released. It is the fruit of our discernment.

However, this Diocesan Pastoral Plan does not simply reflect our ideas. It is deeply rooted in the Word of God and the guidance of the Church. I believe that this will become clear as you read through this document.

- ✓ First, we receive the light of God’s Word
- ✓ Then, we recall the journey the Church has taken since the Second Vatican Council as we confirm the direction our efforts are to take from this point onward: The journey of the Global Church, the Church in Asia, and the Church in Japan.
- ✓ Next, we call to mind the journey of the Diocese of Fukuoka, which includes the three prefectures of Fukuoka, Saga, and Kumamoto. This is because we stand upon their achievements so far as we respectfully take on their legacy and identify what is further required in the present day.

✓ Finally, we keep in mind the words of encouragement and the questions posed by His Holiness Pope Francis during his visit to Japan in November 2019 as we want to respond to these in specific ways as we continue on our journey.

Based on these principles, we release this **Diocesan Pastoral Plan**. First, we declare that our basic source and objective is to be a *church that walks together with the people, driven by Christ's love*. We hope that you will keep these words firmly in your heart. They are the foundation of everything. We have also indicated three pillars and three issues that need to be taken on in order to achieve the objectives of each of those pillars. This is the **Diocesan Pastoral Plan** that will guide us on our forthcoming journey.



We will also present the opinions, proposals, and concrete examples you have all provided to us in order to allow for a more detailed implementation of these objectives that respects the circumstances of each parish, monastery, convent, committee, and office. We present this to you in the form of what each person, each parish, each region, and the diocese as a whole can do.

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan is a tool and an aid. It goes without saying that its objective is to deepen the faith of each and every person and to inject energy into Church activities. This should not be forgotten. In addition, we will gradually review a variety of aspects (e.g. training programs, organization, events, personnel, economics) of the Fukuoka Diocese in accordance with this Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

In 2027 the Fukuoka Diocese will celebrate the 100th year of its founding. We hope that this Diocesan Pastoral Plan will aid preparations for this milestone. I will be happy if it serves as an opportunity to deepen the sense that we are on this journey together.

Please read this document, use it on as many occasions as possible, and share its contents. Let us encourage each other as we journey together. The Gospel of Jesus gives light and hope to people who live in modern society with its many problems. Let us witness and tell others of the Gospel that was given to use through the grace of God.

I would like to continue on this journey with my gaze fixed upon Mary, who kept the Word of God in her heart, contemplated it, and proclaimed it in joy (cf. Luke 1: 26-54).

I ask for the intercession of Mary into the Diocese of Fukuoka as I present this Diocesan Pastoral Plan to you all with my blessing.

Bishop Josep Abella
Diocese of Fukuoka
April 3, 2022



“A church that walks together with the people, driven by Christ’s love”

The Fukuoka Diocese’s Diocesan Pastoral Plan

“Do not be afraid” (Mark 6: 50)

Then he made his disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side toward Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And when he had taken leave of them, he went off to the mountain to pray. When it was evening, the boat was far out on the sea and he was alone on shore. Then he saw that they were tossed about while rowing, for the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out. They had all seen him and were terrified. But at once he spoke with them, “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!” He got into the boat with them and the wind died down. They were [completely] astounded. They had not understood the incident of the loaves. On the contrary, their hearts were hardened.

(Mark 6: 45-5



“Do not be afraid.” These are the words spoken by Jesus to his disciples, who were besieged by a strong wind blowing against the boat they were in. Jesus dismissed the crowd and sent his disciples ahead to the far shore while he “went off to the mountain to pray.” The wind was a storm of such severity that the disciples, who knew the Sea of Galilee well, were greatly distressed. Worried about what might happen to them, the disciples were distracted by the grave situation they were in.

Jesus walked on the water of the Sea of Galilee and approached them. The Gospel tells us that on seeing this, the disciples were afraid and “thought it was a ghost and cried out.” However, it was not a ghost but Jesus. “Take courage, it is I. Do not be afraid!” At an unexpected time, in an unexpected place, and in an unexpected way Jesus appeared to the disciples and helped them. “He got into the boat with them and the wind died down. They were [completely] astounded” (Mark 6: 51).

The boat that is the Church community of the Diocese of Fukuoka set out 400 years ago. During this time, we have many times been besieged by strong winds and experienced many kinds of storms. However, each time the support of Jesus allowed us to overcome our difficulties. During these times, our brothers and sisters have been encouraged by Jesus’s words “Take courage, it is I. Do not be afraid!” They maintained their faith, and contributed to society. There have been those who bore witness to the faith through martyrdom. We cannot forget their witness, which gives us such great encouragement.

Jesus is with us today again and again, telling us “Do not be afraid!” With Jesus guiding us, we pull out to sea. If we all work together to advance under the watch of Jesus, no matter what winds blow against us, no matter what storms come upon us, we will be able to cross the sea without fear. And, in the same way, we are called to welcome into the boat those in present-day society who are besieged by winds blowing against them and share the hope and joy that overflows in a community centered on Jesus. We are glad to have our faith, and so we do not want to keep this treasure all to ourselves. We want to communicate this joy to many, many others. People are renewed by their encounter with Jesus and society is changed by people who have been so renewed. We desire a society that recognizes the dignity of all as children of God.

Jesus is with us in this boat, and so indeed there is nothing we need to fear. We in our Church community here in Fukuoka, Kumamoto, and Saga want to shine the light

of the Gospel with faith in Jesus, who is with us even today.

We look back on the road traveled by the community of the Diocese of Fukuoka with **thanks**. We are encouraged by the **passion** that is communicated to us when we encounter the Gospel and we are therefore inspired to continue on our journey. This then gives us the **hope** to have confidence that we can move into the future. “**Thanks**,” “**passion**,” and “**hope**” are the lights that guide us on our journey.

The Church of the World, of Asia, and of Japan Moving Forward Together **The Journey of the World Church**

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was a great blessing for the Church. It gave a new direction to modern Church’s vision and mission. The Church is a “sign of God’s love” to the world, and it is a community with Christ at its center. Through sharing in these gifts given by God within this community – the laity, members of religious orders, and the clergy – everyone grows as disciples of Christ, and fulfills the services entrusted to us by Jesus. The Council’s *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* contains the following: “**The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts**” (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 1).

As a result of the Council, the global Church has followed a new path under the guidance of each Pope since that time. The liturgy has been reformed with the aim of deepening the faith of each person, and a variety of projects have been realized for the purpose of bringing the Word of God closer to all. Within the community of a Church that is firmly tied to Christ, we all strengthen our bonds to one another and recognize our various callings and services as we are called upon to journey together. The joint responsibility of all Christians was promoted, which led to a deepened understanding that the evangelism the Church entrusts us with is everyone’s responsibility. Indeed, Pope Paul VI made the powerful appeal that “[The Church] exists in order to evangelize” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 14).

Evangelization means “bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: ‘Now I am making the whole of creation new’” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 18).

Pope John Paul II, who guided the Church into the third millennium, made powerful appeals to the world about the message of the Gospel, and all Popes since then have made major contributions to the building of a world based on peace and justice, which is the hope of all humanity. His appeal for peace when he visited Japan resonated powerfully with many people all over the world. Pope Benedict XVI shone the light of the Gospel on the various issues facing modern people and showed us the way to regain our true humanity.

The call to evangelize in the *Evangelii nuntiandi* was reinforced under the guidance of Pope Francis, whose goal is a Church of “outreach.” He ceaselessly calls on us to share the “joy of the Gospel” and protect and nurture all life that we receive from God. Pope Francis pleads with us to see the world as it actually is, have compassion for the suffering and hopes of all people who live in this world, and for the need for all people to work toward justice, peace, and to protect nature. The initiatives taken by the Church community and each Christian to deal with the various problems that exist in the modern world are precious things that arise out of faith. The message Pope Francis communicated during his visit to Japan in November 2019 served as a great encouragement to us. It is now our responsibility to search for specific ways to respond to his call to action.

The Journey of the Church in Asia

The Church in Japan has journeyed together with its sister Churches in Asia. The Church, which is a minority in most of the countries of Asia, has shared in the joys and hopes as well as the sadness and suffering of the people of Asia – nearly two-thirds of the world’s population. It has identified the works of God in the cultural and religious traditions of the people of Asia and contributed to the creation of societies of peace and justice for all and in which the dignity of each individual is respected and protected. In addition, the Church has cherished as friends those who are alienated, those who have been reduced to lives of poverty, and those who have been rejected in a variety of ways. The link to the Church in Asia has led us to expand our view and has shone a light on the journey of our Church. In particular, we have strengthened links to the Church in our neighbor, South Korea, and have cooperated in a variety of ways. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of believers who have come to Japan from other countries in Asia, and this has been a breath of fresh air for the Church in Japan.

Although small in number, missionaries from Japan have been sent to other countries in Asia, and this has also been a source of great joy and encouragement for the Church in Japan.



The Journey of the Church in Japan

We in the Diocese of Fukuoka have traveled together on this journey with the Church in Japan. Let us take a simple look back on this journey, as we need to understand the issues that the Diocese of Fukuoka prioritized on the way.

In response to Pope John Paul II's visit to Japan in 1981 the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan established the "Week of Peace." It also announced its "Priorities and Basic Policy of the Japanese Church" (1984).

The three basic policies were:

- ① Reaffirm that all baptized people are called to share the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to all.
- ② Cultivate the sprouts of the Gospel in Japanese society and work to change non-Gospel realities.
- ③ The Church community accepts these two aspects of evangelization and will work together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

When attempting to implement the "Priorities and Basic Policy of the Japanese Church" issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, something of major importance was realized. This was the "gap between faith and daily life" among the faithful, or put another way, the "gap between the Church and society." We realized that, if we hoped that the Church would grow and announce the Gospel to society, then we would have to overcome this gap. The 1st National Incentive Convention for

Evangelization (NICE1, 1987) took on a role in this process. This was an important process of discernment in which all members of the Church (lay persons, members of religious orders, clergy, bishops) were called on to participate. This journey served as an important opportunity for each person and the Church to turn towards the Gospel. How were we to overcome this separation and take on the task of evangelization? What we found was that the only way was to create an “open Church.” It was for this purpose that the three basic policies were specified: “A Church that journeys together with Japanese society,” “Faith that is nourished through daily life,” and “Parishes that evangelize.” In the wake of NICE1, each diocese implemented a variety of plans.

The journey of NICE2, held in 1993 on the theme of “family,” was another opportunity for important growth. From the perspective of “searching for a way to evangelize from the realities of the family,” the journey and activities of the Church were re-evaluated with the objective of “nurturing families based on God’s will.” The journey of NICE had come to an end at this point, but from this time onward the Church in Japan and all the dioceses in Japan have continued renewing the Church and doing the work of evangelization in a variety of ways. Under the guidance of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan and keeping in mind the characteristic features of each diocese, we have given life to, witnessed, and proclaimed the Gospel. With the cooperation of many people, we have participated in a wide variety of efforts to realize the kind of society God desires for us.

Looking Back on the Journey of the Fukuoka Diocese with Thanks **The beginning of evangelization in the Fukuoka Diocese**

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28: 19). Inspired by these words, St. Francis Xavier came to Japan in 1549 to preach the Gospel of the salvation of the Lord. It is said that in 1557 a church was built in Hakata.

St. Francis Xavier is known as the patron of the mission in Japan. During the ensuing 450 years Japan experienced the period of the “hidden Christians” and the miracle of resumption in the early Meiji period (1868-1912), after which the Gospel of Jesus Christ eventually reached us today.

After the suppression of Christianity for a period of approximately 250 years, priests began to be sent to Japan by the Paris Foreign Missions Society in 1854, when Japan

was opened to the rest of the world. Two years after the so-called “Discovery of Christians” in 1865 at Oura Church in Nagasaki, the Christians of Urakami Church discovered hidden Christians in Imamura in 1867. Once the ban on Christianity was lifted shortly after the start of the Meiji Period in 1873, missionaries from the Paris Foreign Missions Society nurtured the churches at Imamura, Amakusa, and Madara Island, and churches in Fukuoka, Kokura, Kurume, Saga, Kumamoto, Hitoyoshi, and other locations were established and grew.

From around 1889, Sisters from the Congregation des Soeurs de l’Enfant-Jesus de Chauffailles, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres, and other missionaries were sent to the Diocese, where they participated in social welfare and educational activities.

The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (currently known as the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) established the Fukuoka Diocese (including the five prefectures of Fukuoka, Saga, Oita, Miyazaki, and Kumamoto) on July 16, 1927. The first bishop was the Most Rev. Fernand Thiry (Paris Foreign Missions Society). At the time there are thought to have been approximately 7,900 Christians in the Diocese. In the following year, 1928, Miyazaki and Oita were separated from the Fukuoka Diocese.

In October 1931, the Most Rev. A. Breton became the second Bishop of the Fukuoka Diocese at Our Lady of Victoria Cathedral (Daimyo-machi Church).

At the time there were approximately 8,000 Christians.

In 1934, the Bishop’s Residence and Chancery was moved from Ohori to its present location (Josuidori), and it became the center of the Fukuoka Diocese. This was the time period during which Our Lady of Victoria Cathedral and other churches throughout the Diocese were consecrated, a minor seminary was established, and the basis was established for a major seminary. Many religious orders were also invited, and both educational and social welfare activities gained momentum.



However, with the issuance of the National Mobilization Law in 1938, religious activities were restricted and the Fukuoka Diocese began to experience difficult times. The start of World War II ushered in a period of decisive battles on mainland Japan. During this period a number of churches, monasteries, and convents were confiscated by the military and used as barracks and storehouses. As a result, Sunday masses could not be celebrated as they should have been.

The Post-WWII Era

After enduring hard times during the war, the Church began on a path toward restoration once the war ended.

Churches that had been damaged during the war were rebuilt and lay apostolate activities flourished. The groups and associations that were under the umbrella known as “Catholic Action” also flourished. Lay people activities expanded from Fukuoka to all regions within the Diocese, with, for example, the Young Christian Workers (Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne [JOC]) working out of Kokura, Kitakyushu City, the Legion of Mary working out of Saga, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society, among others. Social work such as nursing homes and retirement homes also began to flourish during this period. Missionaries from the Paris Foreign Missions Society, the Missionary Society of St. Columban, and the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions were placed in charge of regions throughout the Diocese where they worked as missionaries. Men and women from religious orders were invited to start educational institutions as well.



After Vatican II

In 1959, Pope John XXIII announced that a Vatican Council would be held, and after approximately two years of preparation, the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican began in October 1962. The objective of the Council was “Not to condemn the faults the world, but to pursue an attitude that [allows us to] handle the problems of the world with mercy.”

For the Diocese of Fukuoka as well, the Council provided an opportunity to review and reform the liturgy and indeed all Church activities in light of the Gospel.

In June 1963 Pope John XXIII passed away, but his successor – Pope Paul VI – announced that the Council would continue. On December 8, 1965, the Fourth Period of the Council came to an end, thus concluding the Second Vatican Council.

In the wake of the results produced by the Second Vatican Council, the Diocese of Fukuoka began reforming the liturgy (the mass), and due particularly to the establishment and development of the Lay Apostolate Council, activities engaged in by lay Catholics became increasingly animated. Youth activities flourished throughout the Diocese, and seminars, retreats, and training sessions came to be held frequently.



1950 Eucharistic procession in Fukuoka

The National Incentive Convention for Evangelization (NICE)

In 1987, the 1st National Incentive Convention for Evangelization (NICE1) was held in Kyoto. This Convention was held based on the assertion that there was a “gap between faith and daily life.” Preparations for this Convention were made not only by lay Catholics, but also the clergy, members of religious orders, and bishops reviewed their lives of faith and held public hearings throughout the Diocese. It was around this time that “sharing” began to flourish.

The Convention provided an opportunity for the Church organization in Japan to place itself under review, which led to the establishment of a variety of committees within the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan. The Diocese of Fukuoka also established subordinate organizations such as the Liturgical Council and the Youth Council, which worked toward nurturing faith through a variety of projects.

In November 1990, the “Catholic Festival” was held at Meiji Gakuen in the city of Kitakyushu, which was an event in which lay Catholics in the Diocese could get together.

In 1993 the 2nd National Incentive Convention for Evangelization (NICE2) was held in Nagasaki on the theme of “Searching for ways to evangelize based on the reality of families.” Although there was sharing from the preparatory stage in the Diocese of Fukuoka as well, there seemed to be insufficient understanding of the relationship between “the reality of families” and “evangelization.”

In November 2000, the 2nd Catholic Festival was held at Kurume Shinai Jogakuin. Lay Catholics from throughout the Diocese interacted in a number of forums held by the Lay Apostolate Council, including a Liturgy Seminar and a sports festival.

From 2011 to 2017 (except for 2014), a “Diocese Day” was held each year in November to increase the solidarity of the Diocese.

The Present and Future

The Diocese of Fukuoka, founded in 1927, will celebrate its centennial five years from now. Today, those who form the core of the Church have lived through the postwar

Church. During these 100 years we have all experienced joys as well as a variety of hardships and difficulties, just as have the Church and the Diocese.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church continues to communicate the works of God's salvation through evangelization. The Diocese of Fukuoka is facing a number of problems, including aging congregations, decreasing numbers of those called to the priesthood and religious orders, and financial issues. As a result, we need to squarely face the current circumstances we are in while growing and advancing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



Pope Francis Visits Japan

Between November 23 and 26, 2019, the Church in Japan was blessed with a visit by Pope Francis. Without a doubt, everyone was moved during his visit. The Pope's message was directed not only toward ourselves, but toward Japanese society as a whole and indeed the entire world. I would like to recall a few details from his message that show us a way to proceed on our journey.

“We know that the Church in Japan is small and Catholics are in a minority, but this must not diminish your commitment to evangelization.”

(Meeting with the bishops, Address of His Holiness, Apostolic Nunciature (Tokyo)
Saturday, 23 November 2019)

“Their witness confirms us in faith and helps us to renew our dedication and commitment to that missionary discipleship which strives to create a culture capable of protecting and defending all life through the daily “martyrdom” of silent service towards all, especially those in greatest need.”

(Tribute to the martyr saints, Greetings of His Holiness, Martyrs’ Monument - Nishizaka Hill (Nagasaki) Sunday, 24 November 2019)

I have come to this place of memory and of hope for the future, bringing with me the cry of the poor who are always the most helpless victims of hatred and conflict.”

(Meeting for peace address of the Holy Father, Peace Memorial (Hiroshima) Sunday, 24 November 2019)

“The proclamation of the Gospel of Life urgently requires that we as a community become a field hospital, ready to heal wounds and to offer always a path of reconciliation and forgiveness. For the Christian, the only possible measure by which we can judge each person and situation is that of the Father’s compassion for all his children.”

(Holy Mass, Homily of His Holiness, Tokyo Dome, Monday, 25 November 2019)



Photo provided by the Vatican

The Journey into the Future: The Diocese of Fukuoka

We are thankful as we look back on the journey we have made up to now. Protecting and further developing this important legacy is our responsibility. Let us maintain hope as we continue on our journey.

Therefore, we posed the question: “What is it that is of particular importance at this time?” Many lay Catholics, members of religious orders, and priests responded to this question. Keeping in mind the guidelines produced by Pope Francis and the Catholic Bishop’s Conference of Japan, we drafted the **Diocesan Pastoral Plan** of the Diocese of Fukuoka based on the opinions, proposals, and concrete examples provided by those who responded to our question.

By accepting and putting into concrete practice this **Diocesan Pastoral Plan**, which serves as series of signposts that give our journey to come direction, we will fulfill the mission we have been charged with in modern society.



“A church that walks together with the people, driven by Christ’s love”

1. Becoming a “Church of outreach”

Walk with those in positions of weakness and both witness and transmit the Gospel

☆Actively engage in the following tasks in order to achieve this goal:

- (1) Meditate on and share the Word of God in order to support the journey of a Church of outreach
- (2) Create opportunities for many people to get in touch with the Gospel
- (3) Work toward creating the kind of society hoped for by God through a wide variety of activities

2. Becoming a “Church of communion” and mutual support

Reinforce systems that ensure unity and cooperation and to nurture communion based in the Gospel in the Church

☆Actively engage in the following tasks in order to achieve this goal:

- (1) Actively participate in the liturgy and increase unity in the community
- (2) Review organizational structures and improve communication in order to achieve reliable unity
- (3) Live the services you are entrusted with

3. Becoming a “Church that is open to the future”

Work toward nurturing an international community and increasing the roles played by youths in the Church

☆Actively engage in the following tasks in order to achieve this goal:

- (1) Support the activities of young people and try out new projects in dioceses and in each of the five regions
- (2) Improve religious education programs for young people and children and aid in the discernment of callings to the priesthood and religious life
- (3) Deepen interactions with lay Catholics who have come from other countries and promote their participation in committees and activities on the diocese, community, and parish levels

Hints for Implementing the Diocesan Pastoral Plan

There is a need at the regional, parish, religious community, committee, group, and office levels to discuss and identify ways in which the **Diocesan Pastoral Plan** of the Diocese of Fukuoka can be concretely implemented. There are things each and every lay Catholic, member of religious orders, and priest can do.

When drafting the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, many people provided their valuable opinions, proposals, reports, and concrete examples to the committee. Through these, we were able to learn together and support each other, which gave us a real sense that we were “journeying together.” And this will lead to deepening the faith of each person and renewing the Church community.

We organized these hints into proposals for all levels: Individual, activity group, parish, region, and diocese. Let us think of and implement specific initiatives that are tailored to the circumstances in each region and parish, with these proposals and concrete examples in mind. Let us also pray and think about what each of us can do individually and let us resolve anew to live as disciples of Christ in modern society.



1. **Becoming a “Church of outreach”**

Walk with those in positions of weakness and both witness and transmit the Gospel

(1) Meditate on and share the Word in order to support the journey of a Church of outreach

What each person can do:

- ① Make time to pray alone, and to the extent possible pray together as a household (e.g. before and after meals, at celebrations)
- ② Make time to meditate on God’s Word

What each parish can do:

- ① Create small groups for the purpose of sharing
- ② Plan bible study sessions

What each region/the diocese can do:

- ① Carry out plans to learn about the life of prayer
- ② Provide retreats and seminar programs at facilities in the Diocese (e.g. Our Lady of the Trappistines Convent in Imari and Shinmeizan, Ohori Catholic Kaikan) and promote participation in them
- ③ Hold Bible courses
- ④ Create teams composed of lay Catholics, members of religious orders, and priests

- (2) Create opportunities for many people to get in touch with the Gospel

What each person can do:

- ① Invite those close to you to Church

What each parish can do:

- ① Create/Improve systems to warmly receive people who come to Church
- ② Look after links to the local community

What each area/the diocese can do:

- ① Prepare programs and events aimed at the wider society/community
- ② Improve the diocese homepage and expand online activities
- ③ Work toward and devise ways to create opportunities to expose people to the spirit and values of the Gospel in a variety of facilities (e.g. educational, social welfare, medical)

- (3) Work toward creating the kind of society hoped for by God through a wide variety of activities

What each person can do:

- ① Take an interest in those in positions of weakness and take concrete action
- ② Take an interest in social problems and find out the guidance the Church in Japan provides on such problems
- ③ Support those who are engaged in social activities and pray that their efforts bear fruit

- ④ Respect each person's situation and actively praise any kind of cooperation

What each parish, activity group, region, and the diocese can do:

- ① Engage with those who require assistance and take concrete action
- ② Prepare locations where those in positions of weakness are welcome
- ③ Under the guidance of the diocese and region, create opportunities to learn about the Church's social teachings
- ④ Under the guidance of the diocese and region, learn the encyclical *Laudato si'* and work on environmental issues
- ⑤ Implement concrete initiatives on human rights and environmental problems at parish and Catholic educational and social welfare facilities
- ⑥ Plan programs in the diocese for the Week of Peace (August) and the Month for Protecting All Life (September)
- ⑦ Establish a Committee for Social Action to prepare, support, and promote initiatives aimed at a variety of social problems in the diocese
- ⑧ Promote the cooperation of the Catholic Church with a variety of groups engaged in social problems

2. Becoming a “Church of communion” and mutual support

Reinforce systems that ensure unity and cooperation to nurture communion in the Gospel in the Church

- (1) Actively participate in the liturgy and increase unity in the community

What each person can do:

- ① Endeavor toward active service in the liturgy, e.g. Bible readings, choir, altar boy
- ② Accompany those close to you, children, grandchildren to Mass

What each parish can do:

- ① Regularly celebrate “Mass with Children”
- ② Include “prayers for the world, the local community, and the Church community” in General Intercessions

What each region/the diocese can do:

- ① During mass and events, pay attention to those from other countries whose Japanese comprehension may be insufficient

② Provide video streaming for those who cannot participate in Mass or events in order to ensure information accessibility

(2) Review organizational structures and improve communication in order to achieve reliable unity

What each person can do:

- ① Actively participate in events held by the diocese and region
- ② Keep in mind and approach brothers and sisters who have left the Church for a variety of reasons
- ③ Keep in mind, visit with, and speak with elderly people who find it difficult to come to Church
- ④ Make efforts to find out information about parishes, regions, and the diocese through use of the Bulletin of the Diocese of Fukuoka

What each parish can do:

- ① Parish priests should respect the activities that have been cultivated over the years in each parish and promote their maintenance and future development
- ② Place importance on interactions among lay Catholics through appropriate after-Mass activities (e.g. mini-café)
- ③ Officers of Church committees and the like can share information to increase unity in the Church
- ④ Create locations and opportunities for interaction that are not restricted to Church activities and events (e.g. places where parents with children can get together, places where elderly people can gather, cooking classes)
- ⑤ Plan a variety of Church programs at times when those with children or jobs are more likely to participate

What activity groups can do in regions and the diocese:

- ① Increase dialogue between bishop, lay Catholics, and priests as well as lay Catholics, priests, and members of religious orders with bishops, and determine and carry out Diocesan policies based on shared understanding
- ② Set up the “Diocesan and Pastoral Council” composed of lay Catholics, members of religious orders, and priests in each diocese and region
- ③ Improve information-related organizations in the diocese in order to better share and distribute information
- ④ Participate in activity groups and invite people to join

⑤ Widely distribute information about the activities of activity groups using the homepage of the diocese and the diocese bulletin

(3) Live the missions you are charged with

What each person can do:

① Recognize the services each person has been entrusted with (lay Catholics, members of religious orders, clergy), understand their various roles in the Church, and increase cooperation

② Ask yourself what it is that you can do and actively volunteer your time and efforts to the community

What each parish can do:

① Create opportunities for sharing so that people can discuss their ideas

What each region/the diocese can do:

① Create opportunities for interaction and discussion among lay Catholics, members of religious orders, priests, and the bishop

② Utilize the homepage of the diocese in order to communicate policies of the diocese determined by Diocesan Pastoral Council as soon as possible

3. Becoming a “Church that is open to the future”

Reinforce systems that ensure unity and cooperation to nurture communion in the Gospel in the Church

(1) Actively participate in the liturgy and increase unity in the community

What each person can do:

① Young people can actively participate in youth activities

② Lay Catholics, members of religious orders, and priests can find out about, support, and pray for youth activities

What each parish can do:

① Include young people as members of Church committees

② Support the participation of young people in diocese and region activities

③ Place importance on the times and locations where young people get together

What each region/the diocese can do:

- ① Support youth activities in each region
- ② Establish a “Youth Center” in the diocese where young people can get together, and entrust to a Youth Committee the task of creating proposals for what role the Center should play and what activities it should provide
- ③ Plan activities such as experiential learning activities, retreats, and volunteer activities through which faith experiences can be deepened and which will lead to greater ties to others
- ④ The Diocese of Fukuoka supports young people so that they can participate in national activities and international youth conventions (WYD)

(2) Improve religious education programs for young people and children and aid in the discernment of callings to the priesthood and religious life

What each person can do:

- ① Cooperate in faith education for young people
- ② Invite children close to you to participate in Church activities
- ③ Learn about the priesthood and religious life and pray for vocations

What each parish can do:

- ① Invite children to participate in Sunday School and hold classes even if there are few students
- ② Place importance on cooperation with kindergartens and nursery schools next to the parishes
- ③ Create opportunities for interaction among members of religious orders, clergy, and children
- ④ Be sure to include an intention for vocations in general intercessions during Sunday mass
- ⑤ Provide support that allows children to participate in programs for young people in the region and in the diocese

What each region/the diocese can do:

- ① Support the activities in the Fukuoka Young Catholics Camp (FYCC) programs held in the diocese
- ② Provide programs to train youth leaders in order to improve church schools (including online)

- ③ Support the work of educational and social welfare programs (e.g. universities, high schools, middle schools, primary schools, kindergartens, nursery schools, social welfare facilities) that provide opportunities for many children and young people to meet
- ④ Make concrete plans with the cooperation of religious orders and other groups to train managerial staff for Catholic educational facilities and social welfare facilities



(3) Deepen interactions with lay Catholics who have come from other countries and promote their participation in committees and activities on the diocese, community, and parish levels

What each person can do:

- ① Warmly welcome lay Catholics who have come from abroad and actively engage with them
- ② Support activities that protect the human rights in Japanese society of those who have come from abroad
- ③ Provide concrete assistance to those around you who have come from abroad and who are experiencing difficulties

What each parish can do:

- ① Include lay Catholics who have come from abroad as members in Church committees and invite them to participate in other parish activities
- ② Devise ways of ensuring that information is shared throughout the parish
- ③ Promote the active participation of lay Catholics who have come from abroad in Mass (e.g. Bible readings in other languages, general intercessions, liturgical services)

What each region/the diocese can do:

- ① Increase the locations where and times when Mass is held in other languages

- ② Devise ways of ensuring that information from the Diocese and regions reaches those who have come from abroad
- ③ Include lay Catholics who have come from abroad as members of diocese and region committees and engage in activities with them
- ④ Create a network within the diocese that facilitates consultations with those who have come from abroad. Create a pastoral team in the diocese to meet the needs of Vietnamese, who are present in extremely high numbers, and coordinate a variety of activities for them.
- ⑤ Utilize SNS to create links to people who have come from abroad
- ⑥ Cooperate with the Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees, and People on the Move and other groups in the active development of activities that aim to realize a society in which no one is left behind

