

カトリック福岡司教区
DIOCESE OF FUKUOKA



福岡司教館
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Prot. No.79/2023

Fukuoka, May 10, 2023

To all the faithful of the diocese of Fukuoka

Dear brothers:

The peace of the Lord be with you.

Thank God, there is a very significant reduction in the COVID-19 pandemic that has imposed so many limitations on us for the last three years. In addition, during these years vaccination campaigns have been carried out and the treatment of people affected by the virus has been improved. Given these data, the Japanese government has cancelled the restrictions it had imposed to prevent the spread of the virus. As you already know, on May the 9 the government has downgraded the classification of the COVID-19 pandemic from category 1 to category 5.

In the diocese of Fukuoka, we accept these new government regulations and, therefore, we cancel the limitations that have been imposed in some churches regarding the number of people who could participate in liturgical acts and we encourage all groups to resume activities that have been suspended due to COVID. In any case, it is true that the virus has not completely disappeared. People who, before going to church, detect fever or some other symptom of physical discomfort, are exempted from the obligation to attend Sunday mass.

Specifically, the following points must be taken into account:

1. The limitation on the number of attendees at the celebration of the Eucharist and other liturgical acts is abolished. In any case, it is recommended to wash your hands with some disinfectant at the entrance of the church and it is strongly requested that care be taken to maintain good ventilation in the premises.
2. You can include all the songs you want in the celebrations. Take care, however, of the issue of ventilation.
3. It is not necessary to sanitize your hands before receiving communion.
4. There is no difficulty in resuming the procession of offerings or in circulating the collection bag.

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5. Regarding the visits to sick or elderly people, consult the family, clinic or nursing home before visiting them.
6. Resume the catechism activities for the children.
7. Resume the activities of the parishes and other groups, always taking care of a good ventilation of the premises.

We have been limited during these last three years. We have noticed a notable drop in the number of people who participate in Sunday Mass. Many other activities of the parishes and groups have also been affected. We all have to make an effort – lay people, religious, priests and bishop – to resume all activities with a new spirit. We will be able to experience again the joy of meeting as a community. May this motivate us to witness and announce the Gospel.

May the Lord bless you abundantly.

Josep M. Abella
Bishop of the Diocese of Fukuoka

