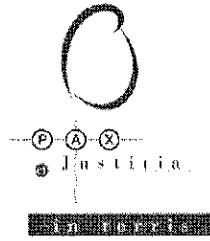


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2020/02/21

COUNTERMEASURES TO COPE WITH THE NEW CORONAVIRUS (1)

Bishop Goro Matsuura

+ Peace be with you.

This is to convey the policy of the Nagoya Diocese concerning the new coronavirus which has become a worldwide concern. This policy has two pillars. First is from the medical point of view and the second one is from the human rights point of view.

From the Medical Point of View

In order to prevent the spreading of the infection, we make our efforts in accordance with the policy of the government based on the advice (suggestion) from the medical science experts, As you are well aware, according to the medical experts, this new coronavirus is a strongly contagious but the death average is relatively low. It has become evident that if people with good basic physical strength and good immunity system are infected, they will show no serious symptoms or health problems. Accordingly, for the time being, the most important is maintaining a good health by making efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, taking enough rest, taking nutritious meal and leading a healthy life style.

As for the concrete countermeasures to prevent the infection, the countermeasures against the influenza virus is consider proper. It is advisable that people with symptoms should wear mask, but mask is not necessary for people without symptoms. Anyhow, in order to prevent the spread, as personal preventive efforts, please follow the prevention practices already promoted in public, and for mass participation and other activities in the church, the following are to be considered.

1. As for the countermeasures for common hygiene, it is advisable to have frequent hand-washing, and place (alcohol-type) disinfectant dispensers in the church and the hall's entrance.
2. The altar servants, the priest and other altar servants, should always wash hands and use disinfectant before mass.
3. If you have cough and or fever, please prevent from taking communion by mouth (tongue). In taking communion by mouth (tongue) there is a danger that the priest's finger might accidentally touch your mouth (tongue).
4. If you feel that you are not in a good state of health, please don't force yourself to attend mass.

5. If ever the government (and or the local government) officially bans any gatherings or events, the church will abide. For the time being masses and church's gatherings are conducted as usual.

From the Human Right's point of view

Starting from China, in many places all over the world the discrimination and exclusion against the infected patients or persons is getting worse. Even in Japan, the same is happening. When somebody close to us is infected, instead of worrying the welfare of the infected person, above any other else we tend to worry about our own safety first. This sentiment is natural, but if we don't put this sentiment under control, it will lead us to an excluding action against the infected persons. If it goes too far, it might develop into discriminative words and actions based on groundless rumors or non-scientific superstition.

In preventing the spread of the infection, "Isolation" is unavoidable. It doesn't mean "exclusion". For example, when child or children of a family is suffering from influenza, the parents will "isolate" the child or children in one certain room of the house while compassionately doing their best to accompany the isolated child or children. I hope, in this society, we will deliver the same compassionate care and consideration if ever someone of us will get new coronavirus infection.

The Japan Catholic Buraku Discrimination Human Rights Committee, learning from the mistake of the "Isolation Policy" of leprocy patients, and the 2002 SARS outbreak, in 2009 released message as printed below. I call that we read over again the message from the Japan Catholic Buraku Discrimination Human Rights Committee dated December 10, 2009 and have sharing session on it. I call that we pray for people suffering from this outbreak, and "in order to protect all life", let's join hands together to overcome this difficult time.

In my prayer.

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2020/02/26

COUNTERMEASURES TO COPE WITH THE NEW CORONAVIRUS (2)

Bishop Goro Matsuura

+ Peace be with you!

This is my second release regarding the new coronavirus. As you have known through the news, on February 24, taking into account that “this one to two weeks is a crucial time of either the time of a rapid spread or the time of cessation of the infection” (the government’s medical experts conference), the government has decided its basic policy. Taking into account that compared to other prefectures, Aichi Prefecture has more infected patients, I decided to review the Nagoya Diocese’ planned gatherings, while reminding you that the over precaution should not lead us into losing our compassion to others and into discriminative action.

POLICY

- Mass is conducted as usual. Meanwhile, following the first policy, please consult always with your health.
- As far as possible please cancel (refrain from conducting) any big meeting (gathering), such as after mass party.

REGARDING THE MARCH ACTIVITIES OF THE DIOCESE

- March 6: “The world Prayer Day” (Cathedral) is cancelled.
- March 8: “The reparation and prayer day for the victims of sexual abuse” in Hirabari Church. Mass will be conducted. The gathering after mass is cancelled.
- March 11: “Great East Japan Earthquake, the day of memorial prayer for the victims and the prayer for the reconstruction” is cancelled.
- March 20: The Mass of the silver and golden jubilee will be conducted as planned, but the party afterward is cancelled.

The celebrations for priests and religious who are celebrating the silver and golden jubilee will be conducted inside the church.

This is the basic policy for the month of March. The policy for the following months will be adjusted according to the development of the situation. In your own respective places please pray for each intention of the canceled gathering above.

In my prayer.