

Kyo.Prot.N. 61/2020

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Kyoto

Pentecost Message for 2020 from the Bishop of Kyoto

■ The Holy Spirit turns Fear into Belief.

I send my greetings to you the faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Kyoto, as we celebrate today the Pentecost Sunday. With the outbreak of COVID-19 virus, I couldn't even engage in a direct contact with you, Masses in different churches have been suspended from the season of Lent up to the season of Easter. With this, many of us are afraid and opted continuing to stay at home, like Christ's disciples, together with Mary, afraid and anxious, they locked themselves up after the Last Supper's events. However, on the 50th day after the resurrection, they received the Holy Spirit as promised by the Lord, they were encouraged and transformed to a confident evangelizers. Today, Christ continues to send the same Holy Spirit to people around the world, to the suffering because of pandemic, to those who are anxious and confused, to comfort and encouraging them to deepen their trust in the Lord who is Life.

■ This year's Pentecost conveys a start of a new life.

The Holy Spirit came down to them as tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. *On each one of them.* Although the church community forms as a group, it doesn't always act as a group. What faith community made of is the faith of those who belongs to it. The Mass (Eucharist) is the summit and origin (spring) of the whole Christian life. Knowing that it is the spring and the summit, days of not able to participate in a Mass are an opportunity to re-examine the religious life aspect of an individual. We are keenly aware of the importance of "living the Mass in daily life" (the theme of the bishop's first letter 2004 and 2005) through the experience of not being able to live a normal life. After Pentecost, they were converted and became one community of believers "devotedly breaking bread and pray" (Acts 2:42), "was one heart and mind" (4:32). For the time being, there are limits as to how we can participate in the Mass, having nurtured by the Word of God, we have been given a valuable time to pray and to rediscover the value of our inner lives. For us, this year's Pentecost is the time to begin a new path of deepening our faith.

■ The Holy Spirit brings unity, not division

Japan and the world, are required to gradually prevent COVID-19 infection by adopting a "New Normal" way of life. With everyone's cooperation, we could eliminate egoism that only confines to personal and own country's safety and security. We need to take each other's hands, to share each other's pain, to protect the vulnerable, to help each other, and by sharing and receiving, we could live together as we embrace the new-normal way of life. There are people around us who helped each other during business suspension and self-discipline. The Holy Spirit is working in moments like these. As Pope Francis said, we must never forget those who are in the refugee camps, the abandoned, those who are suffering and in serious condition because different diseases like COVID-19. Let us receive the breath of the Holy Spirit, and become the "Good Samaritan" who becomes a neighbor who serve, who overcomes fear and prejudice, carrying out our mission to "Protect All Life."

May 31, 2020 Solemnity of the Pentecost

✠ Most Rev. Paul Otsuka Yoshinao, D.D.

Bishop of Kyoto