

May 27, 2026

To all the faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Kyoto

Bishop of Kyoto  
✝ Paul Yoshinao Otsuka

**Toward the 90th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Diocese of Kyoto in 2027  
A Call to Pray Together and Walk Together Throughout the Year**

The Diocese of Kyoto will celebrate the 90th anniversary of its foundation on June 17, 2027.

The history of the Diocese of Kyoto began on June 17, 1937, when the Apostolic Prefecture of Kyoto was established, comprising the prefectures of Kyoto, Nara, Mie, and Shiga, separated from the Diocese of Osaka. At the time of its establishment, pastoral care was entrusted to the Maryknoll Missioners, and Father Patrick Byrne was appointed as the first Apostolic Prefect.

Later, on July 12, 1951, the Apostolic Prefecture of Kyoto was elevated to the status of a diocese. On September 21 of the same year, Father Paul Yoshiyuki Furuya was ordained as the first Bishop of Kyoto. Since then, under God's guidance, the Diocese of Kyoto has continued its journey to the present day, sustained by the prayers and service of many priests, religious, and lay faithful.

In 1987, the year of the 50th anniversary of the Diocese, the anniversary was also commemorated on November 23, the final day of the First National Incentive Convention for Evangelization, known as NICE, which was held in Kyoto.

As we approach the 90th anniversary in 2027, we hope that this occasion not be merely a time to look back on the past, but a time of grace in which we renew our gratitude to God and look together toward the future path of evangelization.

The 90th anniversary is an important milestone on the way to the 100th anniversary, which we will celebrate in 2037. Giving thanks to God, who has sustained the journey of the Diocese of Kyoto, and receiving anew the witness of faith handed down by those who have gone before us, we wish to pray and discern together what kind of Church the Diocese of Kyoto is called to be, how we are to live the Gospel, and how we are to bear witness to it in society.

**1. Gatherings of Thanksgiving for the 90th Anniversary**

The "Gatherings of Thanksgiving for the 90th Anniversary" will be held in each district as commemorative Masses combined with joint celebrations of Confirmation, so that this grace-filled milestone may become an opportunity to hand on the faith to the next generation.

The schedule is as follows:

- Sunday, April 18, 2027: Kyoto North Block
- Sunday, April 25, 2027: Nara Block
- Sunday, May 9, 2027: Mie North Block
- Sunday, May 16, 2027: Kyoto South District
- Sunday, May 23, 2027: Shiga Block
- Sunday, May 30, 2027: Mie South Block

I ask each region to prepare for these occasions so that, together with those who will receive Confirmation, we may give thanks for the journey of the Diocese and renew our mission of evangelization for the years ahead.

## **2. Requests for Concrete Initiatives**

In order to make this year fruitful, I ask each parish, block, religious community, organization, and institution to undertake initiatives such as the following, according to its own circumstances.

### **① To pray with the intention of the 90th anniversary in our hearts**

Please include prayers for the 90th anniversary of the Diocese of Kyoto at Sunday Masses, in the Prayer of the Faithful, during Eucharistic adoration, at gatherings of the faithful, and on other suitable occasions. I hope that the whole Diocese will walk through this year in spiritual communion.

Example of the Prayer of the Faithful: Let us pray for the Diocese of Kyoto, which will celebrate the 90th anniversary of its foundation in 2027. May this year become a time of grace in which we walk together in gratitude, prayer, and unity, and may the faithful of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds support one another and bear witness to the joy of the Gospel.

### **② To reflect on the journey of the Diocese and of each local community**

In each parish, district, and block, please provide opportunities to reflect on your history of foundation, the journey of evangelization, the witness of faith of those who have gone before us, and the history of service in your local community. I would be grateful if you could undertake such efforts as recording testimonies, organizing photographs and documents, and holding gatherings for sharing, in whatever form is possible.

### **③ To deepen our journey as a multicultural Church walking together**

In order to further advance our journey as a multicultural community of faith, please deepen communion with the faithful of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. Let us cherish opportunities to pray together, share responsibilities together, and discern together. Where appropriate, please consider ways to provide multilingual information, prayers, and opportunities for exchange.

### **④ To broaden opportunities for handing on the faith to younger generations**

Please make conscious efforts to create opportunities for children, young people, and young families to participate more fully in the life of the Church through faith formation, fellowship, service, and encouragement toward vocation. I hope that the 90th anniversary will become an occasion for handing on the faith across generations.

### **⑤ To review the priorities of evangelization**

In each community, please prayerfully consider what should be valued and what should be given priority at this time. In particular, I ask you to create opportunities to share and discern concretely about evangelization, vocations, intercultural communion, peace, concern for the poor, and the handing on of faith.

## **Conclusion**

With the prayers and cooperation of all of you, I sincerely hope that the 90th anniversary of the foundation of the Diocese of Kyoto will be celebrated with deep gratitude and joy, and that the journey of the Diocese will be further blessed. May this year become, for all communities connected with the Diocese of Kyoto, a time of grace in which we return to our origins and renew our hope through prayer and encounter. And may each one of us become a bearer of the hope of the Gospel, serving as a bridge that supports the journey leading toward the 100th anniversary.