

Community life under the new corona virus

As of July 11, 2020, the total number of infected persons in Japan was 21,577 (total deaths 982, current number of infected persons 2,607, discharge number 17,988). The cumulative number of infected persons in Oita prefecture is 61. The following relates the situation of the Oita Community since the Japanese government issued a recommendation to refrain from going out on April 7th (rescinded on June 19th)

The economy: Our main revenue producing industry is making cookies and Eucharistic hosts. Sales in April and May 2020 were down about 75% compared to the same month in 2019. The reason for that is because the main buyers of our monastery cookies are tourists. The area around Oita Monastery is a famous hot spring tourist destination in Japan. It is also a popular tourist destination for tourists from Korea and China, but now there are no tourists due to the virus. Our surrounding region, where tourism is the main industry, is also suffering.

In addition, we manufacture and sell the hosts which are used in the Archdiocese of Tokyo, but due to the decision of the Archbishop of Tokyo, all the Masses in the parish were canceled, so there were almost no orders which resulted in a big drop in sales. Since June 21st the parish Masses have been reopened on a limited scale.

Work: For the above stated reasons at present we rarely make cookies or hosts. Instead, we are able to mow the lawns, manage the gardens, cleaning, etc., which we normally did not have so much time for.

Liturgy: The liturgy in our monastery is being celebrated as usual even after the self-exclusion advice was issued from the government. Since Oita Monastery is located far away from the city center, previously it was rare for outsiders to attend the liturgy, but especially during this period there are few outsiders who participate in the liturgy of our monastery.

Every day, just before the end of Compline, we all recite "Prayers for a World Suffering from New Coronavirus Infections" composed by Pope Francis.

Visitation and election of superior: The Regular Visitation was scheduled for April 2020, but due to the Japanese government's recommendation to refrain from travel, Don Aloysius from our motherhouse, was unable to come to Oita. The election of a superior of Oita, whose term expired in late April 2020, would also be impossible, so the term has been extended at the recommendation of the Abbot General. As of June 30 it is undecided when the Visitation and the election of a superior will take place. It may be extended for several months depending on the infection situation in Japan.

Vocations: We were preparing to welcome a young candidate from Vietnam. However, he was not able to enter Japan and he is currently waiting in Vietnam. Beginning in July entrance into Japan from Vietnam will gradually be permitted so we hope that he will join our monastery in the near future.