

TO BUILD A CHURCH COMMUNITY ENRICHED BY INTERNATIONALITY (Directives on Pastoral Care)

INTRODUCTION

In December 2020, I released the Directives on Evangelization and Pastoral Care for the Archdiocese of Tokyo, consisting of three important pillars, as follows: ① **To be a missionary community**, ② **To be a fraternal community**, ③ **To be a life-protecting community**.

In formulating these Directives on Evangelization and Pastoral Care, I was inspired by the words of Pope Benedict XVI. “The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-martyria), celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia), and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia).” (See the Encyclical Letter on Christian Love “Deus Caritas Est” #25).

This three-fold responsibility is closely connected to each other. In order to fulfill the mission of proclaiming the Word of God, we must first be a community celebrating the sacraments. A community that celebrates the sacraments is then driven into the ministry of charity. The ministry of charity is to live the way of life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Church must not neglect this three-fold responsibility, and for this let us all together build “a missionary community,” “a fraternal community,” and “a life-protecting community.”

In the Directives on Evangelization and Pastoral Care, the pastoral care of Catholics of foreign origin belongs to the second pillar, that is “To be a Fraternal Community.” It is stated as follows. “There are a lot of Catholics of foreign origin in the Archdiocese of Tokyo entrusted to our care. There are also their children. Let us strive to have a mutually enriching communion between them and the parish community in their area.” This is an invitation for the entire Archdiocese. Specific action plans are needed to make the pastoral care of Catholics of foreign origin more concrete.

This document contains the Directives on Evangelization and Pastoral Care

for Catholics of foreign origin. However, this is written not only for Catholics of foreign origin, but also for all the faithful involved in the ministry for them, the religious, the clergy, and all parish communities and faith communities in the Archdiocese. It is an important task for the Archdiocese of Tokyo to aim for unity, to strengthen the bond with Catholics of foreign origin and their children.

Before going into the details of the directives, as bishop of the Archdiocese of Tokyo, I would like to share with you my own vision for the Church in Japan.

After being installed as the bishop of the Tokyo Archdiocese under the motto “Unity in Diversity,” I believe that in our present society with a diversified culture, set of values and way of life, each and every community of faith in the Archdiocese, especially the most basic of them which is the parish community, should accept the diversity of people from all walks of life. In particular, I pray for a Church that recognizes and accepts the many foreign nationals living in Japan. I am hoping for a transition from a parish community consisting only of Japanese faithful to a parish community that includes Catholics of foreign origin, living together and sharing their faith with one another. In other words, I envision a change from the “Japanese Church” consisting of Japanese citizens to the “Church of Christ in Japan” that lives in communion with Catholics of foreign origin.

In order to transform into this kind of Church, a lot of effort and sacrifice is indispensable. However, when such a Church comes into a reality, it will become a “sign” that shows in a new way the “connection” between God and human beings, between humans, and between human beings and the environment. In this way, the vision of “Unity in Diversity” will be realized concretely.

Thinking about it in this way, the task of nurturing a community together with Catholics of foreign origin becomes an issue of evangelization which brings about the fulfilment of the Gospel in our modern world, and is “the path to take,” “the state to aim for” for the parish community in the Archdiocese of Tokyo. In order to realize this vision, I ask all of you, brothers and sisters, for your understanding and cooperation, and to take into consideration a concrete action plan based on this objective.

In this document, we will analyze the current state of pastoral care of Catholics of foreign origin and look into specific issues. In the end, I will present concrete goals.

1. ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

A multicultural, multilingual and international community of faith that understands people of different cultures, accepts people of different languages and recognizes people of different origins consist of members from various backgrounds and situations.

Some people have lived in Japan several generations, and have walked along with the church community. There are also many people from East Asian countries who have left their homes as refugees and settled in Japan. Some people come to Japan to work for financial stability. Among them are from South America and East Asia, some of whom have worked for a long time and have rooted their lives deeply in Japanese society. While others return to their home countries after a few years of stay. Moreover, some of them stay in Japan as foreign students or technical intern trainees who will eventually return home. Furthermore, after the encounters and fellowships they experience, some people would lose connection with their homeland and focus on starting a new life in Japanese society. There are also foreign nationals who choose to stay in Japan without a valid visa (residence status). In addition, there are some people who come to Japan to avoid oppression, to gain freedom, and to seek legal protection as refugees. In this way, we live together as neighbors with a wide variety of foreign nationals.

Looking at the present situation in the Archdiocese of Tokyo, in particular in the parish communities, there are three styles of addressing concerns of the faithful who are multicultural, multilingual, and international.

- (1) A parish community that does not hold masses in foreign languages, but considers and responds to the needs of Catholics of foreign origin. In such communities, some portions of liturgical celebrations include languages other than Japanese, and several times a year recollections and confessions are held for those who do not understand Japanese.

- (2) A parish community that holds masses mainly in Japanese but also have masses in foreign languages. In such communities, there are cases where the parish priest presides over the mass, while in some cases other priests are invited.
- (3) A faith community or a parish community that is formed as a group for a particular nationality or language, having a full-time pastor. This includes the Tokyo Korean Catholic Church, Franciscan Chapel Center, Jesuit China Center, French-speaking Community, German-speaking Community.

These three styles actually bring forth involvement in a variety of ways. Some parishes hold a mass in one foreign language once a month, while others hold a mass in a foreign language on a weekly basis and in several languages. Regarding participation, there are those who regularly attend the masses in Japanese, but if there are opportunities they also participate in masses in foreign languages, especially in their mother tongue. There are also those who do not attend masses in Japanese at all. Furthermore, there are those who, despite being Japanese, participate only in masses in a foreign language because of their family. And there are many who have been baptized but never goes to mass.

We have come to understand how the Archdiocese presently involves itself with Catholics of foreign origin through these three styles. However, in our changing society, we might need to find new ways to foster the relationship between Japanese Catholics and Catholics of foreign origin. Certainly, each of the three styles presented has its advantages and challenges to be addressed. From here on, let us consider some issues and use them as a guide to determine our activities for the pastoral care of Catholics of foreign origin.

2. CONSIDERATION OF SPECIFIC ISSUES

2.1 To be United with the Archdiocese

The people of God are gathered under the guidance of the bishop. Each faithful, whether Japanese or non-Japanese, must be aware that they are united with the bishop. Everyone must be aware of being a member of the

Archdiocese under the bishop. I emphasize this not only in terms of the organization of the Catholic Church, but also to stress its importance in our life of faith. The Archdiocese is the venue where the people of God take refuge and live out their faith in the community. Under the auspices of the bishop, all of us shall build one community.

I would like to give particular attention to the above-mentioned faith community in style (3). Certainly, having a common language will bind the faithful closer to each other. However, it is important not to forget that we are all part of the Archdiocese of Tokyo. Always remember that we are all members of the Church community responding to the call to go out and proclaim the Gospel to all people in the Tokyo and Chiba area. Otherwise, our Church community will end up merely looking inward.

To be united with the Archdiocese is first expressed in the communion with me as the Archbishop through liturgy such as the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is then nurtured by constant interaction with the nearby mission cluster (Senkyō Kyōryoku-tai). Furthermore, it is experienced concretely and deepened through participation in the events of the Archdiocese such as the Ten Days for Peace, among other activities. We look forward to the encounter and interaction with people not just those of the same language but with people of different languages as well.

2.2 To be United with the Parish

To be united as a faith community in the one body of Christ transcending race, nationality, language, and culture is a challenge facing the parish community. It is not easy for a parish community to maintain fellowship and unity where several masses are held on Sundays, especially where each mass is celebrated in a different language. It cannot be possible without a firm resolve in faith and a deep respect for others.

It would be difficult to realize a true community rooted in the Gospel if the Japanese faithful will require those of foreign origin to just follow. Catholics of foreign origin will end up to be mere “customers.” On the other hand, Catholics of foreign origin must also acknowledge the efforts and hardships of Japanese faithful who continue to animate the parish community while remembering the plight of their neighbors in this non-Christian society.

Unity does not come that easy from the beginning. Encountering people leads to fellowship and grows into unity. Thus, it is important to foster awareness for Japanese and non-Japanese faithful to work together in building a parish community. The attitude of cooperating with one another while acknowledging each other's differences will gradually lead to the fulfilment of God's kingdom. In this way, let us build the "body of Christ" wherever we may be. Patience and wisdom are necessary.

The role of the parish priest, who is both evangelist and pastor, is essential in building the "body of Christ." He is a key person in the fellowship and unity of the parish community mentioned in style (2) above. Even during times when a priest is invited to celebrate the mass in a foreign language, the parish priest must show concern and take responsibility in addressing the needs of the faithful who gather together. To be able to approach and greet them would give encouragement and strength more than we might think. I call on all the priests to keep this in mind. In addition, I am hoping for the parish priest to deepen cooperation as much as possible with the invited priests who preside the mass in a foreign language and with CTIC.

Many parish communities in style (1) hold international masses celebrated in several languages. To show the solidarity of a community through the liturgy is a great challenge for those who participate in the Holy Mass and a valuable experience of God's grace. It is indeed wonderful to be able to share the table of our Lord's supper while overcoming together all difficulties and stresses that come along the way.

It is unfortunate however that in reality there are more Catholics of foreign origin who are participating in masses of style (2) and style (3). I strongly recommend for all to love, help, and support their own parish community in the area. Jesus, who offered Himself on the cross to gather all people to God the Father, emptied himself by taking the form of a small host in order to gather and unite all people together at mass. I believe that if we only understand this act of love for us by our Lord Jesus, we will be able to create a liturgy that will unite the parish community as one even if such will cause us some inconveniences. Let us continue to make efforts and be creative such that our celebration of the international mass will be an enriching experience.

For the celebration of the liturgy, especially of the Holy Mass, to foster unity, it is necessary for as many people, whether Japanese or of foreign origin, to take certain responsibilities. It is but natural to be actively involved and to fulfil the particular roles assigned within the mass. I also encourage everyone to share information with those who do not understand Japanese very well and are having difficulty in ordinary communication. Special consideration should be given to sharing information concerning matters in the parish in various languages. The experience and realization that the parish community is built on the cooperation of all people will further enrich the liturgy.

2.3 To Belong to the Parish Community

As a general rule, Catholics must belong to the parish community close to their place of residence. Therefore, the Church in Japan has adopted the parishioner profile registration (Shinto seki) system in order to nurture a close connection within the parish community. The faithful helps support the parish community through Church tithing, a monthly donation offered by registered parishioners. In addition, the parishioner profile registration system is useful for facilitating communications and applications (such as for sacraments and funerals).

Since many Catholics of foreign origin do not have a parishioner profile registration in a particular parish community, it is not clear to which parish they actually belong. It might be difficult for them to understand this system, especially for those who come to Japan from a country or region that does not have a parishioner profile registration system. Moreover, there are many people who, at their own convenience, go out searching for a community that celebrates masses in foreign languages. Furthermore, it is a fact that there are Catholics of foreign origin who do not settle in just one place of residence.

However, there are some parish communities within the Archdiocese of Tokyo that explain this parishioner profile registration system to Catholics of foreign origin. In the future, the Archdiocese of Tokyo will find ways to implement a system like this parishioner profile registration for those who received baptism abroad or even for those who are staying temporarily in Japan so that they may belong to a particular parish. We are planning to encourage Catholics of foreign origin to register as a member of the parish

community near their place of residence.

2.4 Faith Education of the Next Generation

Passing on the faith to the next generation is an important mission of the Church, especially of the parish community. However, we must also acknowledge the fact that the Christian faith has not been adequately transmitted to the children of the faithful who have been gathering in masses in foreign language.

In the parish community in style (2), it is difficult for children to participate in Sunday School which is held usually at a time that is in coordination with the schedule of the masses in Japanese. Also, we cannot expect these children to attend the same parish community every week because they have to go as a family to different churches where masses in foreign language are held. Although it may be true that preparing for the reception of First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation would lead the children to attend Sunday School, oftentimes their participation would end up as temporary until the sacrament is received. Encouraging them to attend Sunday School for the purpose of receiving the sacraments alone does not solve the problem.

For children of the next generation and for the youth to encounter God and to foster fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ within the faith community, multi-faceted efforts would be necessary at the levels of the entire Archdiocese and of each parish.

2.5 Separate Celebration of Masses in Foreign Languages

Masses in foreign languages in styles (1) and (2) have their origins in the 1980's and 90's, when the parish communities responded to serve the needs of Catholics of foreign origin who came to them. This then gave rise to a situation where a mass in foreign language was held at a nearby church about once a month.

This process led to communion with the Japanese faithful, and in some cases, it became established in the celebration of the mass in style (1), and in other cases in style (2) taking the form of a parish community providing a venue for the mass. In any case, the Japanese church has been actively accepting as

brothers and sisters those people of the same faith coming from abroad. Despite facing various difficulties, I believe that the efforts of all people were not in vain.

However, more than a quarter of a century has passed since then, and the fact that masses in style (2) which are conducted only in foreign language separate from each parish is not quite desirable whether coming from the concern of building a community of faith, as well as of transmitting the faith to the next generation. Also, the decline in the number of priests has made it difficult to find one who can preside over masses in foreign languages. From here on, it would be necessary to examine the situation and make considerations on the Archdiocesan level concerning masses that are celebrated without using Japanese but only foreign languages. Specifically, it might be necessary to consider establishing a specific parish that will serve as a venue for celebrating masses in several foreign languages.

However, masses in style (1) mentioned above should not be neglected since it is a liturgical model that is characteristic of the “Church of Christ in Japan.” We hope to build a parish community that takes responsibility in providing all the faithful as much as possible a venue for participating in the same liturgy, praying together, and growing together, while transcending differences in race, nationality, language, or culture.

2.6 Understanding and Consideration of Diversity

While aiming to build a united community of faith, we also need to be enlightened by the grace that brings respect for diversity. We should not take lightly the fact that for migrants living in Japan, being in small groups sharing the same language and nationality would bring them renewed strength. It would bring great joy for someone to have a companion who can speak in one’s own native language, giving even just a moment to set the mind away from the various difficulties of everyday life. This also applies to children and young people who struggle at school and at work.

In such gatherings by language and nationality, the people who are gathered together will be able to share the kind of faith that has been nurtured in their culture, as well as express their faith more freely. Consequently, it will be easier for them to serve the parish community while sharing their creative

ideas. Above all, such group activities will be a venue where each person can truly feel at ease.

The Japanese faithful should not deny the opportunity to conduct activities for these small groups by language and nationality formed in the parish community. Rather, it should be emphasized that diverse activity groups must come together to form a parish community. Also, individual activity groups existing independently of the parish community is not encouraged. Catholics of foreign origin should especially be careful about this point.

2.7 Care and Evangelization of the Faithful who have become Disconnected from the Church

There is a considerable number of Catholics, whether Japanese or of foreign origin, who have been baptized but have weakened relationship with the parish community and in some cases have been cut off. What must be done to connect with these people and with those who have not been baptized yet?

Oftentimes, Catholics of foreign origin get to know of the parish community on the occasion of weddings or funerals. In addition, the relationship with the church may be fostered through CTIC or through the priest who presides over the mass in a foreign language. In any case, it is necessary to deepen the relationship with these people while they cooperate with the parish community in their particular area. The person in charge of pastoral work in the parish community must show compassion and consideration while responding to each situation.

Everyone is involved in the Church's mission of evangelization. I would like to emphasize that the activities of the small groups by language and nationality mentioned above should also carry the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel.

There is a tendency for us to focus only on how to respond to the pastoral needs of Catholics of foreign origin. However, it is also important to focus and exert effort in having catechesis classes for non-Japanese such that we may gain new members from the foreign nationals in the same way that we exert effort in our pastoral activities for the Japanese faithful. Just as the Church proclaims the Gospel to the Japanese society, the Church must also proclaim

the Gospel to foreign nationals staying in Japan.

3. ABOUT THE CATHOLIC TOKYO INTERNATIONAL CENTER (CTIC)

CTIC was established in 1990 as a center that will serve the church and the society that has become more international. While working together with numerous migrants, CTIC has provided from time to time pastoral and social services brought to their attention, and has undergone various transitions to date. Our sincere gratitude for all the services, prayers, and contributions of the many people who have supported the activities of CTIC since the time it started. There are two important points of these activities, as follows.

- ① To provide support for the pastoral endeavors of the parish community within the Archdiocese that is characterized by diversity in culture and nationality. This includes requests for priests who would preside masses in foreign languages.
- ② To provide support in certain areas in the way of life of foreign nationals.

Thus far, the priorities given to these two activities have changed according to the circumstances and the needs of the times. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that there were some misperceptions about the role of CTIC within the Archdiocese.

From here on, as we work on defining the purpose and scope of activities of CTIC, we will reorganize the set-up in order to address the pastoral needs of foreign nationals while cooperating with other volunteer and activity groups within the Archdiocese. The recently released Directives on Evangelization and Pastoral Care states the “Creation of Caritas Tokyo Archdiocese.” Specifically, we hope to integrate the various committees that carry out social action in the Archdiocese having CTIC at its nucleus, and with the Episcopal Vicar principally in charge. The essence of the Church is Koinonia (Communion) and Diakonia (Service). However, Diakonia is not merely a service provider. Rather, it is a ministry that puts oneself smaller in humble service. Regarding the relationship with foreign nationals which began with providing services to them, I envision a shift to being able to serve together with them in order to help restore the lives of as many people as possible.

4. SUMMARY OF DIRECTIVES ON PASTORAL CARE AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Based on the above analysis and consideration, the directives on pastoral care for foreign nationals may be summarized as follows:

- The Archdiocese of Tokyo aims to build one community of faith in both the Archdiocesan level and the parish community level while transcending differences in race, nationality, language, and culture.
- The Archdiocese of Tokyo aims to be a community of faith in which all the faithful belong to a particular parish community and share responsibility in building and managing them.
- The Archdiocese of Tokyo aims to be a community of faith that supports each other with a strong commitment in faith and mutual respect so that not a single person will be isolated amidst the diversity of races, nationalities, and languages.
- The Archdiocese of Tokyo will establish a support system by creating a social pastoral organization with CTIC at its nucleus in order to support the efforts to transcend all differences in each parish community.
- In addition, we will review and evaluate the contents of these directives and the corresponding actions taken after about three years, and make corrections whenever necessary.
- Furthermore, this review and evaluation will be carried out mainly by the Archdiocesan Council on Evangelization and Pastoral Care (Senkyō Shiboku Hyōgi-kai). However, we shall gather opinions coming from as many people as possible, thus, we ask for your cooperation, brothers and sisters in the Archdiocese.

CONCLUSION

“For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.”

(1 Corinthians 12:13)

As Paul writes, all of us Christians are part of the one body and are all equally important. No matter where we are in this world, we are given the same mission to build a community and to “proclaim the Gospel” to all people as a community. Our faith is not merely a possession of one person, but a faith shared in community. This community is one body, the body of Christ.

Transcending differences requires creativity and patience. Sometimes it is difficult to understand, and sometimes conflicts arise. Despite all these, let us respect each other and walk together as brothers and sisters “baptized into one body.”

The parishes in the Archdiocese of Tokyo aims to build a church community enriched by the presence of foreign nationals, and by becoming a “Church of Christ in Japan,” I call on everyone to pray and walk together that we may truly grow into a “church community that proclaims the Gospel” in the Japanese society.

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