

Oct. 7, 2011  
Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan

**Official Reply of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan  
To the *Lineamenta* of the Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly**

**Introduction:**

**Commitment to evangelization in Japan: From National Incentive Convention for Evangelization (NICE) to Today**

**1. 20th Anniversary of NICE-1 (Introduction, Question 1)**

After the closure of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* on the Evangelization of modern society by Pope Paul VI in 1975, and especially Pope John Paul II's official visit to Japan in 1981, the Japanese Bishops published the "Basic Orientations and Priorities of the Catholic Church in Japan" in 1984 and held the First National Incentive Convention for Evangelization (NICE-1) in Kyoto in 1987. Responding to the proposals by the participants of NICE-1, the Japanese Bishops published a message entitled "Let us Live Together with Joy". The message pointed out the following three tasks that the Church in Japan had to tackle.

(1) The Church that walks with Japanese Society: the bishops proposed concrete measures to reconsider the faith from the standpoint of life, and the method of evangelization from the standpoint of the real status of society in order that the Church may really walk with society.

(2) Faith that deepens through life: the bishops proposed concrete measures to deepen faith through life.

(3) Parishes that evangelize: the bishops proposed concrete measures to make really evangelizing parishes.

Later, the Second National Incentive Convention for Evangelization (NICE-2) was held in 1993 to discuss the theme: "Finding the Ideal of Evangelization from the Realities of Family Life". In 1995 the bishops published "*Resolution to Peace*" commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In 2001 the bishops published "*Reverence for Life*" that expresses the commitment of the Church to the problems of the today's Japanese Society sharing the sufferings of the oppressed.

In commemorating the 20th anniversary of the NICE-1, the bishops, reflecting the fruits of the NICE, published the following message:

"Twenty years have passed since NICE-1 was held. The message "Let us Live Together with Joy" and the encouragement of sharing from the Bishops' Conference appear to have become steadily widespread. It is especially grateful that bible study

meetings have been held frequently in many places in recent years. The number of Catholics of foreign nationalities has been increasing drastically, and seems to be more than 50% of all the faithful in Japan. The solidarity with people of Asian countries such as South Korea and the Philippines has grown stronger. On the other hand, ever more people are suffering from physical and mental burdens, and are hungry and thirsty for the Gospel. Now people are troubled and suffering severe social and home circumstances that should be called the modern wilderness. Therefore we would like to reaffirm our commitment “in keeping with Christ who became one of our brothers in spite of being God, we are committed to develop a religious community which is open to everyone and become solace, strength and hope for everyone” (cf. Declaration of All the Participants, First National Incentive Convention on Evangelization), and will maintain the resolve in the future” (Bishops in charge of NICE “Review”, “The 20th anniversary of The First National Incentive Convention on Evangelization (NICE-1)—In the Year of St. Paul with the Beatification Ceremony—”, June 3, 2008).

## **2. Events that gave inspiration to the evangelization in Japan (Introduction, Question 2, part 1)**

We can mention following events that recently gave inspiration to the evangelization in the Church of Japan:

### **(1) The Activities of Mother Teresa**

The Activities of Mother Teresa taught the importance of preferential option for the little ones and helped this attitude take root not only in the Church, but also in the whole society in Japan. Mother Teresa’s way has become the aim of the young people in Japan. After experiencing the age of economic bubble in Japan (1986-1991) and its collapse, the Japanese society, though still suffering from the aftereffect of the economic collapse, began noticing the importance of the Mother Teresa’s legacy.

### **(2) Pope John Paul II’s Visit to Japan**

Pope John Paul II’s Visit to Japan (1981) deeply influenced the Church in Japan. Inspired by the Pope’s *Peace Appeal* at Hiroshima, the bishops of Japan saw the promotion of peace as the mission of the only country that experienced the destruction by the atomic bombs, established the “10 Days for Peace” and have observed it annually. Till the Pope’s visit to Japan, the Catholic Church in Japan hesitated to intervene to the socio-political problems, but since then it began to commit actively to the evangelization of society.

### **(3) The Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and the Accident of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant**

From the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake that happened on March 11, 2011, the Church in Japan learned the necessity to be humble before nature, the risk of excessive trust in technologies, the importance of the human bonds that have recently become weak, and the value of the wisdom of the ancestors. Above all, this experience could confirm the work of the Holy Spirit through the support given and voluntary activities. The disaster provoked by the accident of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear

Power Plant showed us afresh the terrible nature of nuclear power, the limitation of human science and technologies, and the need of radical change of our life-style.

### **3. The Social Changes that influenced to the Evangelization in Japan (Introduction, Question 2, part 2)**

On the other hand, the following social changes influenced to the Evangelization in Japan.

#### **(1) Recession and the increase of the number of suicide**

Japan has experienced that economic and scientific development after the end of the Second World War could not bring happiness to the heart of the many people in the end. Especially, seeing that when the economic development faced its limitation, radical recession occurred, and more than thirty thousand people have been continually driven to commit suicide per year for thirteen years, we have to conclude that the orientation of the development of the global economy in these sixty years was not right before the eye of God.

#### **(2) Increase of the number of the immigrants**

The Church in Japan has committed itself to the task of coexistence with the recently increasing immigrants (including many Catholics). It is to be noticed that making the ecclesial communities for the immigrants has been promoted in many areas in Japan. The presence of the immigrants (whether for labor or for marriage) must not be ignored for making ecclesial communities in Japan for today and in the future.

### **4. What is New Evangelization? (Introduction, Question 3)**

#### **(1) Necessity of the spiritual experience**

150 years have passed since the beginning of the re-evangelization in Meiji Era, but before this re-evangelization, Japanese society experienced two and a half centuries' deliberate prohibition of Christianity by the state. Therefore, re-evangelization started not from ground zero, but from handicap. We have to consciously and patiently accept this history in order to inculturate Christianity in Japan. We Japanese Christians have to walk for a long way to proclaim the reality and message of the Gospel (Jesus Christ) to this society not through mere translated language but through our own living ordinary language. For the construction of the original Christian culture, accumulation of the deep many spiritual experiences (experiences of the encounter with Christ) is needed. In order to make our own the language for evangelization, we need also guidance to such spiritual experience. Without accepting, realizing and deepening the Gospel through the encounter with living Christ, blind commitment and participation for the sake of the evangelization of the Japanese society cannot escape from the danger of mere activism, and cannot develop and spread the dynamism of evangelization.

## **(2) Starting afresh from the fundamentals**

“New Evangelization” in Japanese society means to live in consonance with the following words: “See, I am creating new heavens and a new earth; The former things shall not be remembered nor come to mind” (Isaiah 65, 17). We have to listen to this appeal and see the creative work at the root of all being. To return to the root of being means to ask again essentially: “Who is Jesus Christ, the Gospel itself?”; “Who is man over whom Jesus bends himself?”; “What is the earth (society, world) on which we human beings live?”. To do this, we must have contemplative eyes. Without ceaselessly endeavoring to ask again these essential questions, we cannot realize “new evangelization” as a Creative Work. Today, people are searching the essence of humanity from the viewpoint of the relationship between “God-Earth-Man”. This viewpoint can be found in the Bible (cf. Gen. 1-3) and is accepted in Japanese society (“Tian-Di-Ren”). In a word, what is essential for the new evangelization is to “start afresh from the fundamentals”.

## **(3) Recognizing the Love of the Lord**

“Starting afresh from the fundamentals” means: “recognizing [Christ’s] personal love with that heartfelt awareness which made the apostle Paul say: “Christ loved me and gave up his life for me” (Gal 2:20). Only the awareness of being infinitely loved can help us overcome every personal and institutional difficulty. ... It is this love which makes them strong and courageous which instills fire and enables them to dare all”

(Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Starting Afresh from Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium* [May 19, 2002], 22).

## **(4) Contemplation of the Face of Christ**

Therefore, to think about New Evangelization, we can find the important guiding principle in the following things pointed out by Pope John Paul II: “The ethical and social aspect of the question is an essential element of Christian witness: we must reject the temptation to offer a privatized and individualistic spirituality” (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* [Jan. 6, 2001], 52). On this condition, “the men and women of our own day — often perhaps unconsciously — ask believers not only to “speak” of Christ, but in a certain sense to “show” him to them. ... Our witness, however, would be hopelessly inadequate if we ourselves had not first *contemplated his face*. ... Our gaze is more than ever *firmly set on the face of the Lord*” (*ibid.*, 16). In order to practice “initial proclamation” of the Christ the Savior in the Japanese society in the new millennium, we have to first be invited to the “contemplation of the Face of Christ”. Considering the Japanese cultural-religious tradition in which people search for “the men and women who met God” rather than doctrines, “New Evangelization” would be difficult without emphasizing the spiritual approach.

## **(5) Necessary Interreligious Dialogue**

Japanese society is said to be “secularized society without God”, but at the same time, it is also the “society with many religions” in which many religious communities exist.

In such society, the dialogue with the great religious traditions (cf. *Lineamenta*, Nos. 5; 8) is an essential element for the New Evangelization. The dialogue with the religions, which are based on the human experience of the Transcendent, will be an important condition for the future evangelization.

## **Chapter I: Time for a “New Evangelization”**

### **5. Orientation of the Mission in the Church of Japan: Living in the midst of the Life of the People and Accompanying them (Ch. I, Question 2)**

#### **The experience of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake**

After the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, Sendai Diocese established “Sendai Diocese Support Center” for the relief for the areas and people devastated by the disaster by the full assistance of Caritas Japan. Six Catholic parishes in the devastated areas were set up as bases of relief operations by the (Catholic and non-Catholic) volunteers who came from all over the country. These relief operations aimed at society in general, have been welcomed by the people in the devastated areas. During these operations, the Catholic faithful deepened their understanding that “the mission of the Church is not only for the Church, but for the suffering people in society”. At the same time, the promotion of the “relief project for the devastated areas”, based on the decision by the Bishops, has made visible the “mission to participate in the life of those who live in the midst of society”. This practice will give great impulse both to the faithful who were before too introverted and to the non-Christian people in the devastated areas.

### **6. Mission to the rural areas that was before forgotten (Ch. I, Questions 4; 12, 13)**

#### **(1) Urban areas and rural areas**

In Japan, the Church has not fully entered into the rural areas. Many parishes are located mainly in the urban areas. Even in rural dioceses, parishes are located mainly in the great towns. However, immigrant Catholics who married Japanese are giving hope to such rural areas. In the ecclesial communities, that from the outset recognized the immigrant faithful and their important role and endeavored to construct skillfully the relationship between immigrants and Japanese faithful, new hope is awakening.

#### **(2) Vitalizing the power of the immigrant faithful**

For example, in Shinjô city, Yamagata Prefecture, in Niigata diocese (in October 2010) and Jôshû City, Ibaraki Prefecture in Saitama diocese (in February 2009), new parishes were established. In those parishes, Japanese faithful are few, and most of the faithful are faithful who came from the Philippines and their children. The awareness that the immigrant faithful by themselves give life to their ecclesial communities, gave rise to the consciousness that they are not just guests in Japan among the immigrant faithful, and at the same time, this gave opportunities to the Japanese faithful to experience the Church that spread worldwide. Especially for the immigrant faithful who live in the rural areas, the establishment of the parishes provoked in them the awareness for evangelization that they are sent for the

evangelization to Japan in God's plan. It might be "bold" to establish a new parish, a new church in the situation of the diocese in today's Japanese rural area. In Shinjô City and Jôshô City, when the churches suddenly appeared in small towns in the rural areas, they were welcomed by the inhabitants of those areas.

## **7. To raise the question of God in the dialogue with the people (Ch. I, Questions 8; 9)**

### **(1) Rejection of religion**

In Japan, due to the economic development and scientific innovation after the end of the Second World War, secularization advanced rapidly. For this reason religion became a marginalized object from the occult concern or only something that may bring about divine profit to the secular life. In other words, man takes the place of God as the subject of this world. The debacle by the Aum Shinrikyo in 1995 gave great negative influence to the many people's sense of religion. Criminal acts by the cultic religion that adore its human founder gave the impression to many people that religion in general is dangerous. This kind of impression exists even today. Generally speaking, Japanese people are very cautious about religions except traditional Shintoism and Buddhism.

### **(2) New attempt of evangelization**

#### **(a) NGO activities**

Even in the relief operation for the Great Earthquake in March 2011, when Catholic Church members helped devastated people in the name of the Catholic Church, people might be very cautious at first towards that activity. Therefore, the name of Caritas Japan as NGO, which has worldwide trust and is well known in the general secular society, was very useful.

#### **(b) New place for evangelization**

Shinsei-Kaikan (Tokyo), established by Fr. Sôichi Iwashita (1889-1940) in 1934, provided the unique place for education of the youth and evangelization that is different from parishes and Catholic schools. Missionary priest Georges Neyrand (1920-2011), who were former chairman of the Shinsei Kaikan, established a snack bar "Epopée" in Shinjuku, Tokyo in 1980 as the space for evangelization for office workers.

#### **(c) Commitment to the youth**

We can classify two groups of youth: one group is indifferent to religion and the other belongs fanatically to new religions. Most of the youth do not have little or no concern for religion. However, even the young people participate in the traditional religious rituals (for example, the visit to the shrines during the New Year) and they are generally interested in the so called "spiritual" books or vague "spirituality". Today, we have to "help young people make their own place by themselves, or accompany them in making their place", but not to "give the place to young people". "The Japan Catholic Liaison Conference for Youth" (officially recognized by Japanese Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan), established in 2000 to support inter-diocesan activities of the Catholic youth, promotes "Network Meeting". The Church needs to support places in which young people spontaneously and actively participate, using Internet and social forum.

## Chapter II: Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ

### 8. Family as the first place for evangelization (Ch. II, Questions 1; 8; 9)

#### (1) Education of prayer in families

Since for the faithful, the excellent place of spiritual experience is obviously the Holy Mass, first of all, good liturgical education is needed. In the daily life, prayer is the source of the spiritual experience, but not enough prayer guidance is given. And the faithful might neglect their daily prayer. We have to endeavor to stabilize the custom to pray together in one's family. Though family must be the foundation for learning prayer (cf. Dt. 6, 4-9), but most families do not practice prayer. Especially mothers have important responsibility to teach their children to pray as the first step of catechesis of the children. What is important is, first, to establish among the parents and their children the custom to pray together in each family, second, to share the Bible between parents and children. The theme of NICE-2 (1993) was "Finding the Ideal of Evangelization from the Realities of Family Life".

#### (2) Evangelization in the families

The first step of the "New Evangelization" may be this: that, in the Church, the laity can accept the duty of catechesis with their responsibility. Especially in catechesis, the principles must be established that catechists and catechumens share together the Gospel in order not to educate one-sidedly. In Japan, we can rarely find family in which all the members are faithful. Therefore, the first place of evangelization is each family. Pope Paul VI emphasized the importance of the evangelization in families as follows: "the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families" (Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 71). It is urgent to begin "New Evangelization" first from families.

#### (3) Formation of the parents

Due to the secularization of culture, catechesis in family became even more difficult. Therefore, we have to reeducate parents in order that they can give their children catechesis at least in family in the midst of the secularized age. At the same time, if several families together form the community, children can be given catechesis based on their life. Especially when all the members are not faithful, it is important that several families cooperate with each other.

### 9. The place in which the youth can encounter Christ (Ch. II, Question 3)

#### (1) Exposure program of volunteer activity

Today's young people are interested in the volunteer activities. To reflect on the life for others and one's faith through volunteer activities and exposure program in the third world or devastated areas, can effectively promote vocations for priesthood,

religious life or lay ministry. Participation in the exposure program in which young people can encounter the poor and share life with them, can be the opportunity to find the way to live for others.

**(2) To respond to the youth's thirst for the spirituality**

At the same time, there are not few young people who have thirst to encounter living Christ. Recently many young people participate in the meditation session for the youth or meditation session for vocation. Many young people participated in WYD and "Network Meeting" and practice actively contemplative prayer. We have to work hard to respond to this kind of thirst of the youth.

**10. Formation of the laity as evangelizer (Ch. II, Questions 18; 19)**

The awareness that each Christian is evangelizer is not enough formed. In general, few faithful who are active in the study groups or lay apostolic movements have found their place to evangelize while most faithful do not participate in the apostolic activities outside of the Holy Mass. If the laity are formed to give catechesis both to non-Christians and Christians by themselves, they can practice fruitful apostolic activity. Since most of the faithful are not informed about the fact that they are called to be evangelizer as they are baptized and given the gift of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation, they are not enough conscious of their duty as evangelizer. Therefore, continuing faith education is needed. The training is needed to see the events in the realities of life in the light of the Gospel. In a word, we have to learn to pray.

**11. Reconstruction of "New Catechesis" (Ch. II, question 16)**

During forty years after the end of the Second Vatican Council, the Church of Japan introduced liturgical reform and were awakened about its identity as community in the history, that is "Pilgrim People of God" rather than hierarchical institution. But it cannot be said that every community was really renewed according to the Gospel. Therefore, we are called to commit anew ourselves to the renewal of the whole Church that was called for by the Second Vatican Council, now in the name of "New Evangelization". The first step of this renewal must be the reconstruction and implementation of the "New Catechesis" based on the Second Vatican Council. Inculturation is essential for the "New Catechesis".

**Chapter III: Initiation into the Christian Experience**

**12. Catholic Schools as the "Courtyard of the Gentiles" (Ch. III, Question 24)**

Most of the teachers and students in the Catholic schools in Japan are non-Christians. All the Catholic Educational institutions can be called as the "Courtyard of the Gentiles". Catholic schools and institutions play the important role for pre-evangelization.

Catholic education in Japan has history of more than one hundred years. There are

847 Catholic schools with 220,000 students, 27,000 teachers (1,470 clerics and religious [5%]). However, the number of clerics and the religious working in the Catholic schools is decreasing, and the circumstance of the Catholic schools is hard due to the decrease of the population of the children. Each Catholic schools endeavors to reconfirm the spirit of their foundation and Catholic identity.

Recently, groups, in which teachers of several Catholic schools together learn the identity of the Catholic school and share their experiences, were established. Committee for School Education, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan began to commit itself to inform teachers in Catholic Schools about the Catholic identity through the publication of a document entitled "For the Understanding Christianity: to all who work in the Catholic Schools" (2011).

### **13. Lay apostolate in Japan (Ch. III, Question 5)**

In Japan, many lay movements and communities were active after the end of the Second World War. For example, Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne internationale (JOC) was introduced in 1949, Action Catholique Ouvrière (ACO) was introduced in 1950, Christian Life Community (CLC) was established in 1968. However, under the influence of the violent worldwide students' movement, many of them declined. The dissolution of the Catholic Students' Association in 1968 was a sadly symbolic event. On the other hand, some movements such as Société de Saint Vincent de Paul (established in 1914) for charitable activities, Legio Mariae (established in 1948) which serve the people through Marian devotion, Marriage Encounter (from 1977) are active in many dioceses even today. There are nineteen lay Catholic movements and communities that are recognized officially by Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan.

### **14. Neocatechumenal Way and the division that it introduced into Japan (Ch. III, Question 27)**

Some dioceses in Japan introduced Neocatechumenal Way with a bit of expectation. However, since the size of the ecclesial communities was small and the regions were cautious to foreign religion, its missionary activities did not greatly succeed. Rather, it became evident that it has danger to introduce division into the already small parish communities. We must not ignore the fact that the size of the parish in the rural diocese in Japan is very small. We can easily find parishes in which the number of the participants in the Sunday Holy Mass is only around ten. Though in such parishes, the activities like the Neocatechumenal Way must be introduced with prudent judgment of the situation. In Japan it was practiced in the same way as in other countries. We think that this was the reason for the failure of the missionary activity by the Neocatechumenal Way.

We can find many things to learn for the Evangelization from Neocatechumenal Way, but it has the following problems: that it insists and maintains its sole method and forces it the bishops under the authority of the recognition of the Holy Father; that it has powerful community (despite their claim), it has its own command system, its own financial system that is incompatible with Japanese law. It does not obey the instruction of the diocesan bishop.

In a word, today, the Neocatechumenal Way is a movement unnecessary for the Church in Japan. Roman Curia seems not to understand how the Church in Japan suffered and experienced for many years the pain of division of the Church introduced by this movement (Neocatechumenal Way). Its method for evangelization has been greatly harmful for the Church in Japan.

## 15. “New Evangelization” and reorganization of formation programmes for candidates to the priesthood (Ch. III, question 29)

### The establishment of the Japan Catholic Seminary

The vision of the “New Evangelization” for the Japanese society, in the midst of the changes caused by globalization and the present situation, continual commitment and prayer for the renewal—all these gave rise to the present Japan Catholic Seminary. In 2009, two major seminaries located separately in Fukuoka and Tokyo were integrated under the vision for the New Evangelization of the Japanese Bishops. The formation now under way in this major seminary is one of the important fruits of the above vision and commitment.

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## 「いますぐ原発の廃止を」司教団メッセージ

### いますぐ原発の廃止を

#### ～福島第1原発事故という悲劇的な災害を前にして～

日本に住むすべての皆様へ

東日本大震災によって引き起こされた福島第1原発の事故により、海や大地が放射能に汚染され、多くの人々の生活が奪われてしまいました。現在でも、福島第1原発近隣の地域から10万人近くの住民が避難し、多くの人々が不安におびえた生活を余儀なくされています。

原子力発電の是非について、わたしたち日本カトリック司教団は『いのちへのまなざし—21世紀への司教団メッセージ—』のなかで次のように述べました。

「(核エネルギーの開発は)人類にこれまでにないエネルギーを提供することになりましたが、一瞬のうちに多くの人々のいのちを奪った広島や長崎に投下された原子爆弾やチェルノブイリの事故、さらに多くの人々のいのちを危険にさらし生活を著しく脅かした東海村の臨界事故にみられるように、後世の人々にも重い被害を与えてしまうことになるのです。その有効利用については、人間の限界をわきまえた英知と、細心の上に細心の注意を重ねる努力が必要でしょう。しかし、悲劇的な結果を招かないために、安全な代替エネルギーを開発していくよう希望します。」<sup>1</sup>

このメッセージにある「悲劇的な結果」はまさに福島第1原発事故によってもたらされてしまいました。この原発事故で「安全神話」はもろくも崩れ去りました。この「安全神話」は科学技術を過信し、「人間の限

界をわきまえる英知」を持たなかったゆえに作りだされたものでした。

わたしたちカトリック司教団は『いのちへのまなざし』で、いますぐに原発を廃止することまでは呼びかけることができませんでした。しかし福島第1原発事故という悲劇的な災害を前にして、そのことを反省し、日本にあるすべての原発をいますぐに廃止することを呼びかけたいと思います。

いますぐに原発を廃止することに対して、エネルギー不足を心配する声があります。また、CO<sub>2</sub>削減の課題などもあります。しかし、なによりまず、わたしたち人間には神の被造物であるすべてのいのち、自然を守り、子孫により安全で安心できる環境をわたす責任があります。利益や効率を優先する経済至上主義ではなく、尊いいのち、美しい自然を守るために原発の廃止をいますぐ決断しなければなりません。

新たな地震や津波による災害が予測されるなか、日本国内に54基あるすべての原発が今回のような甚大な事故を起こす危険をはらんでいます。自然災害に伴う人災を出来る限り最小限に食い止めるためには原発の廃止は必至です。

原発はこれまで「平和利用」の名のもとにエネルギーを社会に供給してきましたが、その一方でプルトニウムをはじめとする放射性廃棄物を多量に排出してきました。わたしたちはこれらの危険な廃棄物の保管責任を後の世代に半永久的に負わせることとなります。これは倫理的な問題として考えなければなりません。

これまで、国策によって原発が押し進められてきました。その結果、自然エネルギーの開発、普及が遅れてしまいました。CO<sub>2</sub>削減のためにも、自然エネルギーの開発と推進を最優先する国策に変えていくようにわたしたちは訴えます。また、原発は廃炉にするまで長い年月と多くの労働が必要になります。廃炉と放射性廃棄物の処理には細心には細心の注意を払っていかねばならないでしょう。

確かに、現代の生活には電気エネルギーを欠かすことはできません。しかし大切なことは、電気エネルギーに過度に依存した生活を改め、わたしたちの生活全般の在り方を転換していくことなのです。

日本には自然と共生してきた文化と知恵と伝統があり、神道や仏教などの諸宗教にもその精神があります。キリスト教にも清貧という精神があります。そして、わたしたちキリスト者には、何よりも神から求められる生き方、つまり「単純質素な生活、祈りの精神、すべての人々に対する愛、とくに小さく貧しい人々への愛、従順、謙遜、離脱、自己犠牲」<sup>ii</sup> などによって、福音の真正なあかしを立てる務めがあります。わたしたちは、たとえば節電に努める場合も、この福音的精神に基づく単純質素な生活様式を選び直すべきです。<sup>iii</sup> またその精神を基にした科学技術の発展、進歩を望みます。それが原発のない安心で安全な生活につながるでしょう。

2011年11月8日 仙台にて  
日本カトリック司教団

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i 『いのちへのまなざし—21世紀への司教団メッセージ』（中央協議会・2001年）p.104～p.105

このほかに原発の是非に関する日本のカトリック教会のメッセージには『ジェー・シー・オー（JCO）ウラン臨界事故に関する要望書』（1999年）があります。

ii 教皇パウロ6世『福音宣教』（1975年）76「生活の真正なあかし」（中央協議会 ペトロ文庫）

iii 教皇庁正義と平和評議会『教会の社会教説綱要』（2004年）486「d.新しい生活様式」（中央協議会）参照

## 司教団メッセージ「いますぐ原発の廃止を」についてのコメント

### 1. なぜ、カトリック教会が原発に関するメッセージを出すのか？

原発については、国民一人ひとり、また、様々な立場からその是非について議論されています。採算がとれるかどうかといった経済的な立場、子どもたちの健康や市民生活の安全を守る立場、国際競争力を保持しようとする立場など…。

しかし、カトリック教会は原発の是非に関する問題は倫理的な問題、人間の命の問題でもあると考えます。また、私たちはすべての人と連帯して、神の被造物である自然や環境、すべての生命を保護していく責任を持っています。以上の二つの立場から、宗教者として原発の是非について発言する責任を果たしたいと考えています。

### 2. 「司教団メッセージ」について

日本には北海道から沖縄まで16教区があります。各教区にローマ教皇によって任命された大司教、司教、補佐司教が各教区の信徒、諸施設に対する責任を持っています。現在日本の司教は17名。(引退司教は除く)

折々の問題について、これらすべての司教の合意を得たメッセージが司教団メッセージとして発表されます。今回のメッセージは11月8日に仙台で行われた特別臨時司教総会において、全員の司教の合意を得て司教団として発表するに至りました。また、日本のカトリック信徒だけではなく、日本に住むすべての人々に向けた呼びかけとしました。

### 3. なぜ、今、原発についてのメッセージを発表するのか？

- ① 原発事故以来、脱原発か原発存続なのか議論され始めましたが、政府はその国民的な議論を待たずに、なし崩し的に原発存続の方向に進み始めています。再稼働への道を歩み始め、原発技術の輸出交渉なども再開されています。このような時こそ、国民的な議論によって、原発の是非について考えるべきです。そのために、このメッセージを発表することになりました。
- ② カトリック教会の司教団メッセージ『いのちへのまなざし』(2001年)では、脱原発の方向を示しましたが、その存続を容認する立場でした。福島第一原発事故を目の当たりにして、司教団は原発に対するより踏み込んだ明確な姿勢を打ち出すことにしました。

### 4. いますぐに原発を廃止することができるのか？

2011年の夏、関東、東北では原子力発電が止まり、電力不足が予測されましたが、市民、企業、自治体などの節電努力によって、それを乗り越えることができました。いますぐに原発を止めても、節電によって、電力供給不足は乗り越えられることを証明したと言えます。国際競争力などの点でハンディを負うことになるかもしれませんが、自然エネルギーの開発を推進することで新たな国際競争力を育てるようになるべきです。日本の技術力と国民の節電などによるライフスタイルの転換に期待したいと思います。原発事故の被災地である東日本だけではなく、日本全体として脱原発、脱電気エネルギー依存への生活転換が求められます。

### 5. メッセージの中の言葉の説明

1 頁

「人間の限界をわきまえる英知」：人間の知識・技術・努力などには限界があり、その限界を知ることが真の英知（真の知恵）です。科学技術の分野においてもこの英知を謙虚に受け入れる必要があります。人間の知識や技術力をもってしても原発は制御できないことが起こりうることは、今回の事故でも明らかになりました。

「平和利用の名のもとに」：広島、長崎における原子爆弾の恐るべき体験から、日本人は核兵器廃絶を悲願としています。この「平和利用」という名のもとに、原発という核エネルギー利用に方向を転換しました。しかし、原発の技術は核兵器開発に容易に利用されることも指摘されています。私たちはこの点からも原発の廃止を考えるべきです。

「清貧」：物や金（欲望）に執着することのない生き方。物や金は不要と考えるのではなく、全ての神の被造物（水、自然・・・）の価値を正しく認め、それを大切に使い、ほかの国や人々と公平に分ち合う生き方。

「従順」：神の望みに従うことを意味します。

「離脱」：物や金や人に関わる利己主義から抜け出し、“所有する (to have)” 満足から、“存在する (to be)” 喜びへ移行することを意味します。

「自己犠牲」：個人が欲望のままに生きるのではなく、他者・神への愛をもって自らの生活を他者・神のために捧げて生きることを指しています。個人の倫理に留まらず、地球市民として限られた資源や生産物を全ての人と等しく共有し公平に分ち合って生活すること（連帯の精神）の意味も含まれます。

6. 今回のメッセージでは「脱原発依存」だけではなく、「脱電気エネルギー依存」の生活転換を訴えるものです。それが、脱原発だけではなく地球温暖化への対策も含めた地球環境、人間の命を大切にすることになります。

2011年11月10日 仙台において  
社会司教委員会  
委員長 高見三明大司教

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「いましてすぐ原発の廃止を」 司教団メッセージ 英語版

Abolish Nuclear Plants Immediately  
~Facing The Tragedy of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant Disaster~

To all residents in Japan,

The accident in the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant triggered by the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake contaminated the ocean and land by radiation, and tragically disrupted the daily life of an enormous number of people. Even now, almost one hundred thousand people are evacuated from the neighboring area of the nuclear plant, and numerous people are forced to live in fear and anxiety.

With regard to the pros and cons of nuclear plants, we, Japanese bishops, expressed in our message “Reverence for Life –A Message for the Twenty-First Century from the Catholic Bishops of Japan” as follows:

“It has provided a totally new source of energy for humanity, but as we can see in the destruction of human life in a moment in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the disaster at Chernobyl and the life-threatening criticality accident at Tokaimura, it also has the potential to pass huge problems on to future generations. To use it effectively, we need

the wisdom to know our limits and exercise the greatest care. In order to avoid tragedy, we must develop safe alternative means of producing energy.”(1)

The “tragedy” in this message was brought about by nothing less than the accident in the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant. This nuclear disaster wiped out the “safety myth”, which was created because people put too much trust in science and technology without having “the wisdom to know our limits”.

In the message “Reverence for Life”, we, Japanese bishops could not go so far as to urge the immediate abolishment of nuclear plants. However, after facing the tragic nuclear disaster in Fukushima, we regretted and reconsidered such attitude. And now, we would like to call for the immediate abolishment of all the power plants in Japan.

With regard to the immediate abolishment of nuclear plants, some people voice concerns about energy shortage. There are also various challenges such as the reduction of carbon dioxide. However, most important of all, we as members of the human race, have responsibilities to protect all life and nature as God’s creation, and to pass on a safer and more secure environment to future generations. In order to protect life, which is so precious, and beautiful nature, we must not focus on economic growth by placing priority on profitability and efficiency, but decide at once to abolish nuclear plants.

Because of the prediction that a new disaster will occur due to another earthquake or tsunami, all the 54 nuclear plants in Japan are at risk of horrific accidents like the latest one. Therefore, in order to prevent human-generated calamities associated with natural disasters as much as possible, it is essential to eliminate nuclear plants.

Although nuclear plants have been supplying energy in the context of “peaceful use” to society until now, they have also released an enormous amount of radioactive waste such as plutonium. We are going to place the custodial responsibility of these dangerous wastes on future generations for centuries to come. We must consider this matter to be an ethical issue.

Nuclear power has been encouraged by national policies up to now. As a result, natural energy has fallen behind in development and popularity. We urge that the national policies be changed to place top priority on development and implementation of natural energy, which will also contribute to reducing carbon dioxide. On the other hand, it takes a long time and enormous labor to decommission a nuclear plant. Therefore, the decommissioning of reactors and the disposal of radioactive waste must be conducted with extreme caution.

Indeed, electricity is essential for our lives today. However, what is important is to amend our ways of general life by changing the lifestyles that excessively depend on electricity.

Japan has its culture, wisdom and tradition that have long co-existed with nature. Religions such as Shinto and Buddhism are also based on the same spirit. Christianity has the spirit of poverty as well. Therefore, Christians have an obligation to bear genuine witness to the Gospel especially through the ways of life expected by God; “simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the lowly and the poor, obedience and humility, detachment and self-sacrifice”. (2) We should choose anew a simple and plain lifestyle based on the spirit of the Gospel (3), in

cases like saving electricity. We live in the hope that science and technology will develop and advance based on the same spirit. These attitudes will surely lead to a safer and more secure life without nuclear plants.

From Sendai  
November 8, 2011  
Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan

<Notes>

- (1) *Reverence for Life –A Message for the Twenty-First Century from the Catholic Bishops of Japan* (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, 2001, p.104~p.105)  
Another message on nuclear plants announced by the Catholic Church in Japan is “Petition on the Criticality Accident at the Uranium Conversion Facility, JCO Co. Ltd” (1999).
- (2) Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 76 (1975)
- (3) Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 486 d. New lifestyles (2004)

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「いましてすぐ原発の廃止を」 司教団メッセージ スペイン語版

## LLAMAMIENTO DE LOS OBISPOS DE JAPÓN A LA CIUDADANÍA, PIDIENDO LA SUPRESIÓN DE LAS PLANTAS NUCLEARES

Ante la trágica desgracia del accidente nuclear de Fukushima, los obispos católicos nos dirigimos a toda la ciudadanía de Japón, para hacer un llamamiento urgente por la supresión inmediata de las centrales nucleares. Tras el accidente del reactor número 1 de Fukushima, con ocasión del terremoto, la contaminación radiactiva se ha extendido por tierra y mar. Se perdieron muchas vidas humanas y está amenazada de ansiedad la vida diaria de otras muchas, como las cerca de cien mil personas todavía evacuadas en refugios provisionales.

En nuestro mensaje sobre la vida a comienzos del milenio ya alertamos sobre el problema moral de las centrales nucleares: **“El desarrollo de la energía atómica ha proporcionado a la humanidad una nueva fuente de energía, pero también ha puesto una pesada carga sobre los hombros de esta generación y de las siguientes, como nos lo han hecho ver sus funestos efectos: las bombas atómica sobre Nagasaki y Hiroshima -destruyendo en un instante tantas vidas- y accidentes como el Chernobil o el de Tokai -poniendo en peligro tantas otras-.**

Aun poniendo en juego mucha sabiduría para discernir las limitaciones humanas, el intento de usar con eficacia esa fuente de energía conlleva inevitables resultados

trágicos. Por eso pedimos que se desarrollen energías alternativas seguras.

**Ya en el citado mensaje del 2000 nos referimos a las “trágicas consecuencias”. Hoy el caso de la planta nuclear número 1 de Fukushima lo demuestra. Con este accidente se derrumbó el frágil “mito de la seguridad”. Con exceso de confianza en la tecnociencia, se fabricó ese mito. Faltó sabiduría para discernir las limitaciones humanas.**

**En la fecha que publicamos el citado mensaje sobre la vida no llegamos hasta pedir la supresión de las centrales nucleares.** Sin embargo, la trágica desgracia de la planta nuclear de Fukushima nos hace reflexionar. Hoy queremos hacer un llamamiento por la supresión de todas las centrales nucleares en Japón.

Se objetará que suprimirlas conllevaría escasez de energía y se habla también de la necesidad de disminuir el calentamiento global. Sin embargo, es prioridad humana la responsabilidad de cuidar el medio ambiente, proteger todas las vidas creadas por Dios y transmitir a las generaciones siguientes un entorno seguro y pacífico.

En vez de absolutizar el criterio economicista de la ganancia y la eficacia, es urgente, para proteger las vidas humanas y el medio ambiente, decidir sin más tradanza la supresión de las centrales nucleares.

Se cierne un peligro enorme sobre un país con 54 centrales nucleares en el que se prevén nuevos terremotos y maremotos. Para disminuir lo más posible los accidentes causados por mano humana, que acompañan a las desgracias naturales, es urgente suprimir estas instalaciones.

Las centrales nucleares han proporcionado recursos energéticos a la sociedad, amparadas bajo el lema de “uso pacífico de la energía nuclear”. Pero también han producido inmensos desechos radioactivos, como el plutonio. Estamos cargando indefinidamente sobre las generaciones siguientes la responsabilidad de su conservación. Hay que plantearse esto como un problema ético.

Hasta ahora los gobiernos han promovido la industria nuclear como opción política, retrasando el desarrollo de energías alternativas. Pensando precisamente en el problema del calentamiento global, hacemos un llamamiento para que se cambie esa opción política nacional y se dé prioridad a la promoción y desarrollo de energías naturales alternativas.

Harán falta años y esfuerzo de muchos trabajadores para consumir el cierre de las plantas nucleares y habrá que llevar el máximo cuidado para deshacerse de los desechos radiactivos. Se dirá que la electricidad es imprescindible para la vida actual, pero habrá que cambiar el estilo de vida y será importante que no dependamos excesivamente de la energía eléctrica.

Japón hereda una sabiduría ancestral y una cultura de convivencia en armonía con la naturaleza. Budismo, sintoísmo y otras religiones comparten esa tradición, con la que sintoniza el espíritu cristiano de austeridad y frugalidad. Como nos decía Pablo VI, la manera de vivir que Dios nos pide exige “oración, frugalidad y amor a los demás, especialmente a los más pobres” (Evangeli nuntiandi, 76). Y, como nos dijo Juan Pablo II, la seriedad de los problemas ecológicos está pidiendo un cambio de mentalidad que lleve a un cambio de estilo de vida en el que “la búsqueda de la verdad, belleza y bondad, en comunión con los demás para el bien común, sean factores determinantes de las opciones de consumo, ahorro e inversión” (cf.

Centesimus Annus, 36).

Ahorrrando electricidad y eligiendo un estilo de vida sencillo y frugal cumpliríamos el encargo de dar testimonio auténtico del espíritu del evangélico. Más aún, precisamente porque deseamos el progreso y el desarrollo de la tecnociencia, pedimos que se lleve a cabo basado en ese espíritu, para lograr una vida segura y pacífica sin necesidad de centrales nucleares.

En Sendai a 8 de noviembre, 2011.

「いましてすぐ原発の廃止を」司教団メッセージ 韓国語版

## 지금 당장 원자력 발전소의 폐지를

### ~후쿠시마 제 1 원전사고라는 비극적인 재해를 경험하고~

일본에 살고 있는 모든 분들께

동일본 대지진으로 기인한 후쿠시마 제 1 원전 사고로 바다와 대지가 방사능에 오염되어 많은 사람들의 생활터전을 잃어 버렸습니다. 지금도 후쿠시마 제 1 원전 인근 지역에서 10 만 명에 가까운 주민들이 피난했고, 또한 일본의 많은 사람들이 불안에 위협을 느끼는 삶을 살아가고 있습니다.

원자력 발전의 시비에 대해 우리 일본 가톨릭 주교단은 [생명을 향한 시선 - 21 세기에 보내는 주교단의 메시지 -]속에서 다음과 같이 말하였습니다.

"(핵 에너지 개발)은 인류에게 전례 없는 에너지를 제공하게 되었지만, 순식간에 많은 사람들의 목숨을 앗아간 히로시마와 나가사키에 투하된 원자 폭탄과 체르노빌 사고, 그리고 더욱 많은 사람들의 생명을 위태롭게 위협했던 도카이무라(東海村)의 임계사고(臨界事故)에 볼 수 있듯이, 후세의 사람들에게도 무거운 피해를 안겨주는 일이 될 것입니다. 그러므로 원전의 올바른 활용은 인간의 한계를 인정하는 영지(英智)와 면밀하고 세밀한 주의를 거듭하는 노력이 필요할 것입니다. 그러나 비극적인 결과를 초래하지 않기 위하여, 안전한 대체 에너지를 개발해 나아가기를 희망합니다."<sup>1</sup>

이 메시지의 "비극적인 결과"는 바로 후쿠시마 제 1 원전 사고에 의해 현실이 되고 말았습니다. 이 원전 사고로 인해 [안전 신화]는 여지 없이 무너지고 말았습니다. 이 [안전 신화]는 과학 기술을 과신하고, [인간의 한계를 식별하고 인정하는 영지(英智)]가 없었기에 일어난 것이었습니다.

우리 가톨릭 주교 단은 "생명을 향한 시선"에서 지금 당장 원전을 폐지해야 한다는 외침까지

<sup>1</sup> 『생명을 향한 시선 - 21 세기에 보내는 주교단의 메시지』 (중앙협의회 2001년) p.104~p.105

이 밖에도 원전의 시비에 관한 일본 가톨릭 교회의 메시지에는 『JCO 우라늄 임계 사고에 관한 요망서』 (1999년) 이 있습니다.

이르지는 못했습니다. 그러나 후쿠시마 제 1 원전 사고라는 비극적인 재해를 경험하면서, 반성과 함께 원전을 당장 폐지해야 한다고 외치고자 합니다.

당장 원전을 폐지하는 것에 대해서 에너지 부족을 걱정하는 목소리가 있습니다. 또한 CO2 삭감의 과제 등도 있습니다. 그러나 무엇보다 먼저 우리 인간은 하느님의 피조물인 모든 생명과 자연을 지키고 자손에게 보다 안전하고 안심할 수 있는 환경을 전해야 할 책임이 있습니다. 이익과 효율을 우선으로 하는 경제 지상주의가 아닌 고귀한 생명, 아름다운 자연을 지키기 위해 지금 당장 원전 폐지를 결단해야만 합니다.

새로운 지진이나 지진해일에 의한 재해가 예측되는 가운데, 일본 국내에 54 기의 모든 원전이 이번과 같은 엄청난 사고를 일으킬 위험을 안고 있습니다. 자연 재해에 따른 인재를 가능한 한 최소한으로 막기 위해서는 원전 폐지는 필연적입니다.

원전은 그 동안 '평화적 이용'이라는 이름 하에 에너지를 사회에 공급해 왔습니다만, 반면에 플루토늄을 비롯한 방사성 폐기물을 다량으로 배출해 왔습니다. 이는 우리가 이러한 위험한 폐기물의 보관 책임을 반영구적으로 후세대가 지게 하는 것입니다. 이는 윤리적인 문제로서 생각하지 않으면 안됩니다.

지금까지 국책 의해 원전이 추진되어 왔습니다. 그 결과, 자연 에너지의 개발과 보급이 늦어 버리고 말았습니다. 우리는 CO2 삭감을 위해서도, 자연 에너지의 개발과 추진을 최우선으로 하는 국책으로 바꾸어나갈 것을 호소합니다. 또한 원전은 폐로(廢爐)에 이르기까지 긴 세월과 많은 노동을 필요로 합니다. 폐기된 원자로와 방사성 폐기물의 처리에는 철저히 주의하면서 나아가지 않으면 안 될 것입니다.

분명히 현대의 생활에 있어서 전기 에너지 없애는 것은 불가능합니다. 하지만 중요한 것은 전기 에너지에 지나치게 의존하는 생활을 고쳐야 하며, 우리의 생활에 대한 전반적인 자세의 전환이 필요할 것입니다.

일본에는 자연과 공생해 온 문화와 지혜와 전통이 있으며, 신도(神道)와 불교 등 여타 종교에도 그러한 정신이 있습니다. 그리스도교에도 청빈이라는 정신이 있습니다. 그리고 우리 그리스도 신자들에게는 무엇보다 "단순하고 소박한 삶과 기도의 정신, 모든 사람들에 대한 사랑, 특히 작고 가난한 사람들을 향한 사랑과 순종, 겸손, 세속적 가치와의 거리두기, 자기 희생"<sup>2</sup> 등과 같은 하느님께서 원하시는 삶을 통해 복음의 진정한 증거가 드러나도록 할 사명이 주어져 있습니다. 예를 들어 우리가 절전하고자 할 때도 이러한 복음적 정신을 바탕으로 하여, 단순하고 검소한 생활양식을 선택해야만 하는 것입니다.<sup>3</sup> 또한 그 정신을 바탕으로 한 과학 기술의 발전과 진보를 바라고 있습니다. 이렇게 하는 것이 원전이 없는 안심할 수 있는 안전한 생활로 이어지는 것이라 생각합니다.

2011 년 11 월 8 일 샌다이에서

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<sup>2</sup> 교황 바오로 6세 『복음선교』 76 「생활의 진정한 증거」 (중앙협의회 베드로 문고·1975년) 참조

<sup>3</sup> 교황청 정의와 평화 협의회 『교회의 사회교설요강』 486 「d. 새로운 생활양식」 (중앙협의회·2004년) 참조

Comments on the Bishops' Message "Abolish Nuclear Plants Immediately"

1. Why does the Catholic Church announce a message on nuclear plants?

When Japanese citizens discuss the pros and cons of nuclear plants, each one speaks from a different stance. The following are a few examples: One citizen is mainly interested in profitability, while another is anxious about protecting children's health and the security of civil life, and yet, another is thinking about the needs to maintain international competitiveness.

On the other hand, the Catholic Church regards the pros and cons of nuclear plants as an ethical issue and a problem of human life. We also have responsibilities to protect nature, the environment and all life as God's creation, in solidarity with all people. We would like to undertake our responsibilities as religious to speak on the pros and cons of nuclear plants from these two stances.

2. Regarding the messages of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan

There are 16 dioceses from Hokkaido to Okinawa in Japan. Archbishops, bishops and auxiliary bishops appointed by the Pope are responsible for the faithful and various facilities in their respective dioceses. There are 17 bishops in Japan today (not including bishops emeritus).

A message, which has reached a consensus among these bishops, is announced occasionally as the message of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan. Such a message was announced this time after all the bishops reached a consensus during the Special Extraordinary Plenary Assembly on November 8 in Sendai. It is addressed not only to Japanese Catholics but also to all residents in Japan.

3. Why is it now that the message on nuclear plants is announced?

- ① After the recent nuclear plant accident, people started to discuss whether nuclear plants should be abolished or maintained. However, the Japanese government is gradually heading toward the maintenance of nuclear plants without paying attention to the public debate. The government has initiated the path to resume the operations of nuclear plants, and restarted the negotiation on the export of nuclear technology. Particularly under such circumstances, the pros and cons of nuclear plants should be examined respecting the outcome of public discussion. This is the reason why we decided to announce this message.
- ② In the message "Reverence for Life" from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan (2001), we said that we would move in the direction of the abolishment of nuclear plants, but took a stance of admitting the continued existence of nuclear plants. Faced with the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant Accident, the bishops have decided to take a more decisive and clear attitude on nuclear plants.

4. Is it possible to abolish nuclear plants immediately?

In summer 2011, the shortage of electricity was predicted because the nuclear plants in Kanto and Tohoku regions stopped operating. However, thanks to the effort to save energy by corporations and local governments and others, we could

overcome the shortage. It can be said that the shortage of electricity can be overcome by saving energy even if nuclear plants stop operating immediately. It might cause handicaps in terms of international competitiveness. However, new international competitiveness should be strengthened by promoting the development of natural energy. We trust Japanese advanced technology, and hope that Japanese people will make efforts to change their lifestyle by various means such as saving electricity. People in all Japan, not to mention Eastern Japan, which was afflicted by the nuclear plant accident, need to change their lifestyle to reduce dependence on nuclear power and electricity.

5. Explanation on the words in the message

“The wisdom to know our limits”: The knowledge, technology and endeavor of the human race have limits, and to know its limits constitutes true wisdom. It is necessary to humbly accept the wisdom in the fields of science and technology as well. The latest accident revealed that something uncontrollable by human knowledge and technology could happen in nuclear plants.

“In the context of peaceful use”: Japanese people have an earnest desire to abolish nuclear weapons based on their horrible experience of atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This desire was converted into the peaceful use of nuclear energy as nuclear plants, in the context of peaceful use. However, it is also pointed out that nuclear technology can be easily used for the development of nuclear weapons. We should consider the abolishment of nuclear plants from this perspective as well.

“Poverty”: It means a way of life not obsessed with desire (greed) for goods and money. It is not the lifestyle that one thinks money and goods are unnecessary, but that one recognizes the true value of all God’s creation (water, nature, etc.), utilizes them with respect, and shares them fairly with others.

“Obedience”: It means to obey the will of God.

“Detachment”: It means to become free from coveting money and goods, and to shift from the satisfaction of “having” to the joy of “being”.

“Self-sacrifice”: It means to live offering one’s life to God and other people with one’s love of God and others, instead of being driven by greed. In addition to the meaning related to the ethic of each individual, it has a meaning to live sharing the limited resources and products equally among all people and partaking of them fairly as a global citizen (the spirit of solidarity).

6. In this message, we appeal to reduce not only “dependence on nuclear plants”, but also “dependence on electricity”. Such efforts will contribute to respecting global environment and human life, not to mention the abolition of nuclear plants and the measures against global warming.

From Sendai  
November 11, 2011  
Archbishop Joseph Mitsuaki Takami, S.S.  
President of the Episcopal Commission for Social Issues

