



ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT

Dispensation from Mass extended until Monday, November 23;

Catholics obligated to continue keeping holy the Lord's Day

The Communications Department shares the following message from Father Stephen Pullis, Director of the Department of Evangelization and Missionary Discipleship and member of the liturgical team advising Archbishop Vigneron during the coronavirus pandemic:

In light of the continued spread of the coronavirus in southeast Michigan and the impossibility for parishes to safely accommodate all Catholics for Mass on Sundays, Archbishop Vigneron has extended **the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation for all the faithful in the Archdiocese of Detroit, as well as for all travelers during their time within the territory of the Archdiocese of Detroit, until Monday, November 23, 2020.**

While the dispensation from the grave obligation to attend Sunday Mass is in effect, all baptized Catholics are reminded of the grave necessity they have to keep holy the Lord's Day. Archbishop Vigneron wrote a pastoral note entitled "The Day of the Lord" little more than one year ago calling to mind this important spiritual obligation. As the day of the Resurrection of our Lord, Christians from the earliest days set Sunday apart as a day unlike others. When it is not possible to participate in person in the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is vitally important for every member of the Catholic Church to nourish his or her soul during these days. This means cultivating a prayer life in their homes, reading Sacred Scripture – especially the prescribed readings for the Sunday Mass – and making Christ the center of one's home and being his disciple the central identity of one's life. It also means continuing to understand Sunday as a day set apart for the Lord. This means activities on Sunday should be different from the pursuits of the rest of the week. Prayer and time for God, time for family, and works of charity should be central to a Catholic's Sunday.

The obligation to attend Mass (when not dispensed) on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is a grave call for us who have been incorporated into Christ by our baptism to share in the sacrifice of Christ to the Father. It is an obligation that we worship God in a way far superior to our most creative and ingenious efforts because it is not our work but Christ's. Therefore, we enter into the work of Christ (as members of his body) and we share in the graces of this sacrificial worship. While the dispensation remains in effect, it is imperative that we remember what awesomeness it is to participate at Mass, particularly in receiving Christ in the Holy Eucharist. To lose the centrality of the Mass in our lives would be a spiritual tragedy.

A general dispensation to all the faithful has been given so as not to unduly bind the consciences of those who are greatly troubled by the destructive potency of the coronavirus as well as to care for the most vulnerable among us. **Catholics who engage in other activities that would present a similar or greater risk of contamination** (eating out at restaurants, traveling, non-essential shopping, widening one's circle of contacts, etc.) **should begin to return to Sunday Mass as they are able.** While one does not commit a mortal sin by absenting one's self during these days due to the dispensation, one would be deprived of the immeasurable spiritual graces Christ desires for his faithful when they actively participate in the Mass.

Archbishop Vigneron and his advisors will continue to monitor and adjust this dispensation as needed for the spiritual and physical health of Catholics in southeast Michigan. Let us continue to invoke our patroness St. Anne for her protection of the faithful in the Archdiocese of Detroit and for a swift end to the coronavirus pandemic.