



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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June 2, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

Recently you may have heard news of the lifting of the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass in person during the COVID-19 health crisis, a major milestone in our journey back to normalcy. In light of this important transition, I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to you, the faithful, for your ongoing perseverance in the face of the many unique challenges that this pandemic has posed in our lives. The enduring patience and flexibility of the faithful as we navigate these unprecedented times has been invaluable in aiding our efforts to keep each other safe.

It is with great hope that we look forward to an end to the pandemic and to the complete reopening of our Parish communities for in-person worship. This is indeed a moment worthy of celebration and thanksgiving.

We continue to be mindful of those who have been directly affected by the virus, those that are currently suffering its effects, and those that have lost loved ones. May we keep them always close in thought and prayer.

In light of the continued decline in cases and in hospitalizations, as we progress beyond the long-present threat of COVID-19, I invite and encourage you to begin attending Mass in person again, confident that at this time, a return to our parish communities is safe for a vast majority of us.

As we enter into the celebration of the Year of the Eucharist, let us take this opportunity to not only resume in-person attendance but also reaffirm the importance of the Eucharist in our lives. It has been a constant consolation to know that our parishes have worked tirelessly to make the celebration of the Mass accessible by various virtual means; and while most will continue to do so, I nonetheless encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to pursue a deeper encounter with our Lord through full and active in-person participation in the Mass.

With kindest personal regards, I remain

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore

June 2, 2021

**STATEMENT OF THE BISHOPS OF THE PROVINCE OF BALTIMORE AND THE
ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON**

Lifting the General Dispensation from the Obligation to Attend Mass

We, the Catholic Bishops of the Province of Baltimore and the Archdiocese of Washington, give thanks to Almighty God for the progress our country has made in curbing the coronavirus pandemic. The average number of new cases of COVID-19 continues to decline due to the observance of safety protocols and the increase of the availability of the vaccine. At this time, many places in our region are enjoying a return to some sense of normalcy.

Therefore, we are lifting the dispensation of the Sunday and Holy Days Mass obligation in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Dioceses of Arlington, Richmond, Wheeling-Charleston, and Wilmington and reinstating that obligation beginning on Saturday, June 26, 2021 and Sunday, June 27, 2021. We welcome and encourage the Faithful to return to full in-person participation of the Sunday Eucharist, the source and summit of our Catholic faith (cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 1246-1247 and Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2180).

This obligation does not apply to those who are ill; those who have reason to believe that they were recently exposed to the coronavirus, another serious or contagious illness; those who are confined to their home, a hospital, or nursing facility; or those with serious underlying health conditions. One should consult his or her local pastor if questions arise about the obligation to attend Mass (Canon 1245 and the Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 2181).

Safety protocols and other liturgical directives in each diocese remain in effect until modified or revoked by the respective Diocesan Bishop.

Let us continue to be united in prayer for one another and for an end to the global pandemic.

Given on June 2, 2021

Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory
Archbishop, Archdiocese of Washington

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop, Diocese of Richmond

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop, Archdiocese of Baltimore

Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan
Bishop, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop, Diocese of Arlington

Most Reverend William Francis Malooly
Apostolic Administrator, Diocese of Wilmington