

SUNDAY & HOLY DAY OBLIGATION RESTORED

BY THE COLORADO BISHOPS



April 6, 2021

The Bishops of Colorado have announced that the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days will be restored on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021, and all Catholics who are healthy and without significant risk factors or other serious reasons should resume normal Mass attendance in the coming weeks.

This is being announced with over six weeks of notice to give parishes and Catholics adequate time to prepare. As Catholics, we are invited by God to gather together in community, and participate fully in the Sunday Eucharist, which is the “source and summit of the Christian life.”

As the Church teaches: “Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” *Catechism 2182*

The Sunday and Holy Day obligation is not something God asks of us out of his own necessity or need to be worshipped, but rather a gift to the faithful for our own spiritual nourishment, happiness, and eternal salvation.

Over the last 11 months, the dioceses resumed in-person Masses, following public health protocols and guidelines. Our parishes have continued to increase attendance and welcome back as many people as possible. The safety and health

protocols implemented at our parishes have proven to be extremely effective, and we are unaware of any issues of community spread happening at a public Mass. Prudent health precautions will still be taken by every parish.

It is important for Catholics to know that the Church has always provided for exceptions to the Sunday and Holy Day obligation, and that anyone with a “serious reason” or “grave cause” is excused from the obligation. ***Below is a list of specific criteria that you would remain dispensed.***

- If you are ill or your health condition would be significantly compromised if you were to come in contact with someone who might be sick, for example, if you have an underlying condition or are in a high-risk category.
- If you exhibit flu-like symptoms.
- If you have good reason to think you might be asymptomatic of a contagious illness, for example if you were in recent contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or the flu.
- If you care for the sick, homebound, or infirm and unable to leave them unattended.
- If you are pregnant
- If you are 65 years of age or older (per the CDC’s recommendation of high-risk individuals).
- If you cannot attend Mass through no fault of your own. For example, if no Mass were offered, you are sick, or, while wanting to go, you are prevented for some reason you cannot control such as your ride does not show up, the church is at capacity.

Catholics are encouraged to consult with their pastor if they are unsure about their personal situation. Anyone who isn’t able to go to Mass should continue to keep the Sabbath holy with intentional time in prayer including engagement in the readings

for the day, which may be enhanced through watching a pre-recorded or livestreamed Mass and making a [spiritual communion](#).

Finally, let us ask the Lord for a renewed spirit in every one of us: that we can emerge from this pandemic stronger and with an increased commitment to sharing the Good News and building up Christ's Church.

Let us pray for those who have drifted from their faith, that their hearts will be moved to return; And let us pray for a full end to this pandemic, for everyone who suffered loss or despair, and for everyone who valiantly served others, that God may bring them peace and comfort.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila

Archbishop of Denver

Most Reverend Stephen J. Berg

Bishop of Pueblo

Most Reverend Michael J. Sheridan

Bishop of Colorado Springs

Most Reverend Jorge Rodriguez

Auxiliary Bishop of Denver