

LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

It's Time to Get Back to Mass!

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April 7, 2021 in *Catholic New York*, Newspaper of the Archdiocese of New York



God told us, "Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day!"

For two millennia, we Catholics have believed that we best keep Holy the Lord's Day by Sunday Mass!

Yes, for the last year, we have prudently been able to decide that the emergency health crisis can allow us to excuse ourselves from that God-given obligation.

Our elderly, or people with compromising conditions that weaken them can still excuse themselves, as has always been the case. But for the majority of us—are we going to restaurants? To the kids' soccer and little league games? To the store? To the beauty parlor? To gatherings with family and friends?

Well, then, it's time to get back to Mass.

One of our fine pastors gave me this incident. He stopped at the supermarket in his neighborhood for a bit of shopping. There he kept meeting parishioners who greeted him and told him how they missed Sunday Mass and wanted to get back. Finally, exasperated, he replied, "Here you are in a crowded store shopping, taking your time, in contact with items touched by hundreds of people. Church is a lot safer! Come back to get food for your soul!"

A year ago, we, your pastors, advised you not to come to church. We had no choice, since wise health guidelines required us to close our church buildings. We reminded our people that protecting our health, and that of others, in the midst of an international pandemic was a very good moral reason not to attend Mass. Our parishes responded with live-stream Masses, but all know those, however much appreciated, are not the same as "being there." In the summer, those health precautions eased up a bit, and we could re-open and invite a limited number back. Our parishes rose to the occasion with scrupulous cleaning, sanitation, ventilation, distancing, and restrictions—masks, no holy water or sign of peace, no contact or communion from the chalice—and you gradually began to return.

No more gradual about it! It's time to get back to Sunday Mass!

Last Sunday we celebrated our highest holy day—Easter! Jesus has risen from the dead! That very night, the Gospel tells us, He celebrated Mass with the two disciples He had met on the road to Emmaus. He did that evening what He had done the Thursday before at His Last Supper. And, "They recognized Him in the breaking of the bread!"

We recognize Jesus at Mass and Holy Communion. We enter again the eternal, infinite mystery of His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Every Sunday Mass is a renewal of the Last Supper, Good Friday, and Easter.

It's time to get back to Sunday Mass!

Wear masks, yes!

Get tested, you bet!

Wash hands, please!

Get vaccinated as soon as you can, sure!

Keep social distancing, of course!

Don't go if you're sick, elderly or your health is shaky, obviously!

Don't shake hands!

Be grateful good folks carefully sanitize the Church after each Mass.

But, for God's sake, get back to Sunday Mass!

We need medicine!

We need food for the soul!

We need vaccination from sin, Satan, and eternal death!

We need herd immunity as sheep under Christ our Good Shepherd.

All this we behold at Mass!

How can we stay away?

Easter blessings! See you at Mass!

