



ARCHDIOCESE OF ANCHORAGE-JUNEAU
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

June 23, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us always.

I am grateful to God that in recent months, cases of COVID-19 have significantly decreased in the state of Alaska. More residents have received the available vaccines, and the United States Center for Disease Control and local municipalities have continued to relax their guidelines. As a result, many of our parishes are operating at or approaching near-normal levels.

Therefore, it is appropriate to reinstate the obligation to attend Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. This obligation reinforces our need for the essential celebration of the Eucharist, which is “the source and summit of the Christian life”. Accordingly, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will take effect on the weekend of July 3-4, 2021.

As has always been the case, those who have a serious reason or are dispensed by their own pastor are exempt from attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Serious reasons include, but are not limited to:

- those who are ill;
- those with underlying health conditions or exposure to COVID or other contagious diseases;
- those confined to their home, a hospital, or a nursing facility;
- those who prudently judge that their age or health condition would put them at risk of contracting COVID if they came to Church in person at this time;
- those who live in more remote areas of the archdiocese when Mass is not available.

Please consult your pastor if you have any questions about the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.

The global pandemic is not over. We remain vigilant. Because our archdiocese is vast, COVID circumstances at locations may vary widely. Consequently, pastors are making the appropriate safety decisions for their parishes. They will continue to adjust safety protocols as necessary. I ask you please to continue to offer them your support. If you have any questions about the safety protocols in your parish, please check with your pastor.

For the time being, the suspension of distributing the Precious Blood of Christ will remain in effect, as more discernment and study are necessary. Rest assured that one receives the full reality of the Eucharist under either species.

As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, I invite us all to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession), to join our Brothers and Sisters in worship at Holy Mass, and to prepare appropriately to receive the Real Presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in Holy Communion. Let us continue to pray for one another.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Archbishop Andrew Bellisario, C.M.