



DIOCESE  
of  
LAFAYETTE-IN-INDIANA

**To: All Clergy, Central Administration**

**Re: Statement on the Extension of the Dispensation from the Obligation of Sunday Mass Attendance**

**Date: August 3, 2020**

Today, the Bishops across all five Indiana dioceses have extended the dispensation from the obligation of Sunday Mass attendance until Nov. 1, 2020. In a joint statement, the bishops of the Province of Indianapolis announced that the dispensation was extended from a previously set day of August 15, because of the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Indiana.

The group released the following statement:

“While commending our pastors and pastoral life coordinators who have gone to great lengths to assure safe worship spaces in our churches, due to the increase in COVID-19 cases in our state, the Indiana bishops have decided to extend the dispensation from the obligations of Sunday Mass attendance beyond August 15 until November 1, 2020, unless further developments determine otherwise.”

In the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana our diocesan and parish staffs have gone to great lengths to implement policies and procedures to ensure safe worship spaces.

Bishop Timothy Doherty explained that he was confident local parishes would continue to practice social distancing and safety protocols so that public Mass and the sharing of the spiritual gifts of the Church may continue.

“To be dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not mean people should stay away from Church or fail to keep holy the Lord’s Day. We continue to invite each of you to prayerfully consider attending Mass with your parish family. In this way you may more fully experience the gift that Jesus gives us in the Eucharist and the life of grace.”

As your parishioners consider their ability to attend Mass, please advise them to keep the following 6 guidelines in mind which should influence their decision-making process:

1. You cannot attend Mass through no fault of your own (e.g., no Mass is offered, you are infirmed, or, while wanting to go, you are prevented for some reason you cannot control {e.g., your ride did not show up, the church was at capacity}).



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2. You are seriously ill, or if not seriously ill, your health condition will be compromised if you were to contract a communicable illness (i.e., you have underlying conditions or are in a high-risk category) for as long as this endures. *Use the dispensation and do not attend Mass.*
3. You have good reason to think you might be asymptomatic of a contagious illness (e.g., you were in recent contact with one who contracted a contagion). *Use the dispensation and do not attend Mass.*
4. You exhibit flu-like symptoms. *Use the dispensation and do not attend Mass.*
5. You are overcome by anxiety and fear of becoming ill by being at Mass, such that you will not be able to participate in the Mass in a full and active manner; you should rather speak with your pastor about this anxiety.
6. You care for the sick, homebound, or infirmed.

The diocese encourages those who have been away to contact their local parish to learn of the various protocols that have been put in place for their safety.