



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
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## **Obligation to Attend Mass Reinstated**

Bishop David A. Zubik is overjoyed to join all the Catholic bishops of Pennsylvania in reinstating the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, starting August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Since public health restrictions have relaxed, “More and more people are returning to our churches to celebrate the sacraments and for other events that reflect who we are as the Body of Christ,” Bishop Zubik said. “I thank God for their faith and for this opportunity to worship Him together, and to receive His healing grace in the Eucharist.”

A statement from all Pennsylvania bishops said that, “Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, has been with us throughout this very difficult period and is most especially near to us when we encounter him in the Eucharist. The Eucharist offers us his healing and peace, his mercy and reconciliation. It is time for everyone to return to the Eucharist with renewed faith and joy.”

Ordinarily, Catholics have an obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation, unless illness, disability, severe weather or another pressing circumstance prevents them from going. “Dispensations” may be issued in extraordinary situations, such as blizzards, to reinforce that people should not go to Mass when it is unsafe to do so. In March 2020, to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the bishops issued the statewide dispensation that will lift on August 15.

“The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days comes from our Baptism as Christians. Baptism compels Christians to unite themselves with Christ at the altar in his saving Sacrifice of the Cross,” the Pennsylvania bishops wrote.

Bishop Zubik is encouraging parishes to continue live-streaming Mass. “Many, many shut-ins have come to appreciate such beautiful opportunities for them to be connected to the Church,” he said.

As always, people who are ill, who suspect that they may have been exposed to a contagious disease, have caregiver obligations or have serious anxiety about being in a large group at this time are not required to attend Mass. People who are ill or who may carry a contagious illness are strongly encouraged to stay home.

“Those who are legitimately excused from Mass on Sundays and Holy Days are encouraged to spend time in prayer, meditating on the Death and Resurrection of the Lord, reading the Sacred Scriptures, and uniting themselves to Christ in his worship of the Father of us all. Those who are legitimately excused are also encouraged to view a broadcast of the Mass which is intended for those who cannot participate in person.”