

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): coming back to Sunday Mass

*Question: What is happening the weekend of June 5/6?*

**Answer: June 5/6 is when the dispensation from the Sunday Obligation ends and all of us return to the Sunday Mass.**

*What does “dispensation” mean?*

**“Dispensation” from the Sunday Obligation means that we did not have to go to Sunday Mass; we were *dispensed* from that obligation.**

*What does “obligation” mean?*

**By “Sunday Obligation,” what we mean is that we are *obliged* to attend the Sunday Mass. Or in other words: we “must” go the Mass. Sundays are Holy Days of Obligation, each Sunday of the year, on the same level as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. The Sunday Obligation is what we Catholic Christians do in holy obedience to the Third Commandment of the famous Ten Commandment: “Keep holy the Sabbath Day.”**

*What if I attend Mass each weekend at the 5 PM Saturday evening Mass?*

**Our 5 PM Saturday evening Mass is also a “Sunday Mass” and fulfills the Sunday Obligation; the Saturday Mass is the “vigil” Mass for the Sunday that follows. Or more accurately, it is the “anticipatory” Mass, insofar as it *anticipates* the Sunday Mass.**

*Will masks still be required to attend Mass?*

**The Diocese has issued updated COVID protocols, which I shared with parishioners via a video on Flocknote. The summary: for those who are vaccinated, masks are no longer required.**

*Will some of the pews still be closed off?*

**Like with the question about masks, which are no longer required for those who have been vaccinated, social distancing also is no longer required for people who have been vaccinated. Some certain pews will be closed off to create social distancing for those parishioners who will need it, but most of the pews will now be open.**

*When will the Precious Blood return? When will the Sign of Peace return?*

**As per the statement from the Diocese, the Precious Blood and the Sign of Peace are still omitted for now. Please stayed tuned.**

*I keep hearing about a Parish Festival, which is scheduled to take place on our parish's "patronal feast day." What is the Parish Festival?*

**The first-annual Parish Festival will take place after the 5 PM Mass on Saturday, August 14. It is a celebration of our parish patronal feast day: the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15).**

**We hope that the Parish Festival will be an annual summer event. It will begin with an outdoor Mass on the school's northeast field, followed by a barbecue dinner. Everyone is invited to bring sides, salads, or desserts to share, and there will be water and juice for drinks. The playground areas and the fields will be available for games and activities. Parish ministries and groups are invited to set up tables or booths to promote themselves and their work in a Ministry Fair.**

**The parish Pastoral Council welcomes feedback after the Parish Festival to help us keep making this an awesome annual event.**

*How long into the evening will the Parish Festival go?*

**We will have a formal ending for the Parish Festival at 8 PM with a brief prayer service and *luminaria* in the church parking lot. The *luminaria* will be white sandwich sacks filled with sand, and tea candles will be lit and placed in the sack. The *luminaria* will be placed around the parking lot, and when everything is in place, we will pray a decade of the Rosary together, which will conclude with a final blessing.**

**People can stay longer after that if they want, but 8 PM will be the formal conclusion of the Festival. Families with young children are invited to be there as long as they want, but if the young children need to get home for bed-time, then of course families (and everyone) can leave whenever they want. Nobody has to stay the entire time.**

*What can I do to help?*

**The Pastoral Council has formed a committee to execute planning and preparation. There are several sub-committees that are tasked with the specific aspects of the Festival (for example: the Ministry Fair; liturgy; communication; food preparation; activities; etc.). If you are interested, please contact Krista at the parish office, and she will put you in contact with the Festival committee.**

*What if it rains?*

**In the event of rain, the Mass will in the church, and dinner and activities will take place in the school gym. Please pray for sunshine, no rain, and no smoke!**

*Who are invited?*

**Certainly, all of our parishioners are invited, even if you do not normally attend the 5 PM Saturday Mass. If you would like to attend your usual Mass on Sunday morning (7:30, 9, or 11:30 AM), you can arrive at 6 PM for the Parish Festival.**

**Guests, friends, and neighbors can attend on an invitation basis. Please keep in mind, however, that we are not sure what COVID protocols will still be in place, if any, which may or may not affect how large of a crowd we can have.**

**Also, please keep in mind that we will need a fairly accurate count of who will be attending so that the Pastoral Council can be sure to have enough food for everyone.**

**Please stay tuned during the summer for more updated information regarding the Parish Festival.**

*What can I bring to the Parish Festival?*

**For the Mass, please bring your own lawn chairs or blankets to sit on, as we are going to have Mass outdoors on the school's northeast field. For the barbecue, please bring some sort of side or salad to share, and even a dessert if you would like. Please remember which dishes are yours so that you can take it home with you at the end of the night.**

*Will there be a parish Novena leading up the Assumption?*

**Yes, there will be a Novena (nine days of prayer) in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, shared via video on Flocknote and Facebook.**

*Will Mass continue to be live-streamed?*

**Yes, each Mass (all Sunday and weekday Masses) will continue to be live-streamed. That is because we were already going to install that system so that our homebound parishioners could tune in for Mass and still be part of our parish family in faith, rather than having to tune in for Mass on the**

television or internet with EWTN, with priests and people whom they do not know and with whom they have no relationship.

*What if our wedding had to be delayed? Or a Baptism? Or a funeral for a family member who died during COVID?*

**Fortunately, we have been able to keep doing weddings, Baptisms, and funerals, though with small congregations present. If you have had to delay any of these important events for whatever reason, please contact the parish office and we will take care of you and get things scheduled.**

*Even though the CDC, government officials, SRH, and Bishop Daly all tell us that we are safe and that it is time for life to return, more or less, to normal, and even if I am vaccinated, what if I am still hesitant to return to Mass and other aspects of parish life?*

**Whatever the cause of our hesitation, whether it is fear or anything else, we must remember that we are a people of faith, and Jesus is Lord, and He has conquered sin, death, fear, and every other weapon of the enemy, and we are always invited and continually challenged to put our faith and trust in Him. Many people will continue to experience hesitation (again, be it fear or something else), and they will not feel ready to enter into life again. Please know that I am more than happy to visit with you, to speak with you and listen to you. We are going to get through this. We already have been getting through this, and the light at the end of the tunnel has come at last. We will continue to do what we can to get back into it, and the Church, our parish, and I myself – we are ready to help anybody and everybody who is in need. Please do not hesitate to ask.**