

# The Sunday opportunity

A message about COVID safety measures at archdiocesan parishes and the lifting of the dispensation that excused Catholics from participating at Sunday Mass in church

**30 April 2021, 11:00 AM**

In recognition of how the spiritual and emotional needs of the Catholic faithful are met in great part by the parish community gathering for Sunday Mass in church...

And in view of the ever-increasing number of parishioners who are vaccinated, and who have a holy desire to worship at Sunday Mass with others in church...

But aware that social distancing in church greatly reduces the number of parishioners that can be accommodated...

**Therefore, starting on 5-6 June 2021, the proverbial buck will stop with the Pastor/PLC about which COVID safety measures to practice, in consultation with staff and pastoral council, and in keeping with local ordinances.**

The pandemic isn't over. The Pastor/PLC should proceed cautiously when relaxing the recommendations of the CDC and local public health officials, who still advise...

Social distancing, wearing a mask (especially if distancing is difficult), avoiding crowds and the hand-to-hand contact of sharing or passing things, like hymnals and the Cup.

The Pastor/PLC should publish which safety measures will be practiced after the June date, so that parishioners can make their decision about whether or not to attend.

**Also on 5-6 June 2021, the dispensation will expire that excused Catholics in the Archdiocese of Dubuque from participating at Sunday Mass in church.**

As the pandemic isn't over, even without a dispensation, Catholics can still legitimately excuse themselves from Sunday Mass if they're afraid of getting COVID, or if..

They're frail from age or illness, or caring for someone sick, homebound, or an infant, or weather makes driving hazardous, or work and Mass schedules conflict.

In short, there is no sin in missing the Sunday obligation if you would go if you could go, but you can't for reasons outside your control.

*A lot of people use the term Sunday obligation to refer to going to Mass and avoiding work, but maybe it'd be better to call it the Sunday opportunity to...*

*Gather together, hear the word proclaimed and explained, receive the Bread of Life, re-create ourselves by relaxing, and grow in holiness by helping the poor.*

Michael Jackels  
Archbishop of Dubuque