



SACRED HEART PARISH

PARROQUIA DEL SAGRADO CORAZÓN

SPECIAL MESSAGE ABOUT RETURNING TO MASS

Dear Parish Family,

With joy I reach out to you in regards to a recent decree from Bishop Soto. Effective this Sunday, the Bishop is **ending the dispensation** from the obligation to attend Sunday mass and other solemnities. In other words, *the obligation to attend Sunday Mass for Catholics in the Diocese of Sacramento is back in effect*. To be clear, as is always the case, if you are sick, take care of those who are sick, or have a condition that prevents you from coming to mass, the obligation does not apply. We will continue to livestream the mass for you all.

What this ultimately means is that we want you back - we want you back in Church, we want to share with you in ministries, we want you to participate in the life of the parish again. Please see in the Bishop's decree, not simply a rule being enforced - but a loving shepherd who obliges us to do something that he knows is good for us. For we know, an encounter with the Lord is always good. Praise God for all of you who have returned already, and all of you who have persisted throughout this time cooperating with all of our safety protocols.

For those of you who may be hesitant about coming back, know that we will maintain some of the precautions - hand sanitizer will be readily available, ministers (especially those who are distributing communion) will continue to wear masks, ministers will still sanitize their fingers between communicants, the back pews will remain spaced for those that want to maintain a social distance, and the vestibule area will be available for those who would like to participate in the mass from there.

Because of the Bishop's decree, in addition to the changes we have already implemented, you will see some changes to our liturgies in the weeks to come:

- Our choirs will again lead us in singing all of the mass parts.
- We will no longer have contact tracing/sign-in before masses
- More ministers will return to serving (please let Angie know at the parish office if you would like to be put on the schedule again for serving)
- We will reinstitute the sign of peace with a simple gesture, but refrain from contact beyond households.
- Holy Water will return (but at a later time) - for those who need Holy Water now, there are bottles available at the parish office, or you can bring your own water to be blessed.

We have attached the decree re: the revocation of the dispensation for you to read, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. God bless you all - to God be the glory.

In Christ,

Fr. Raj

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