

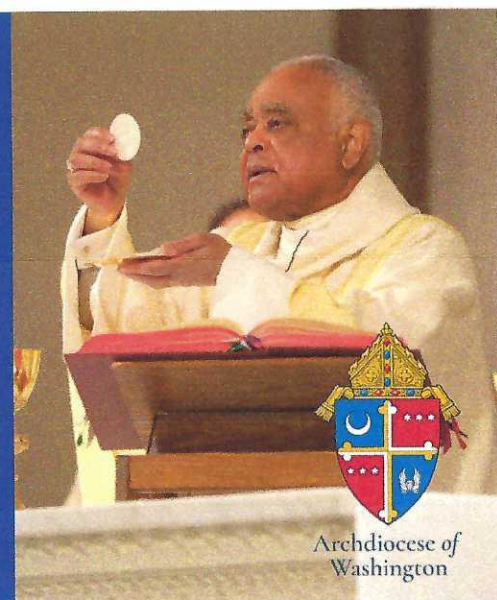
“Our transition back to in-person worship is a long-awaited moment. The bishops of our region have given careful consideration as to how we can move forward together, respecting the autonomy of each local Church. Because we live in communities close to one another, we felt it best to approach the restoration of in-person worship on a united front.

Our people have been so patient and cooperative with the procedures that were designed to protect us from the virus that we could not be more grateful for the spirit of genuine concern for everyone in our parishes.

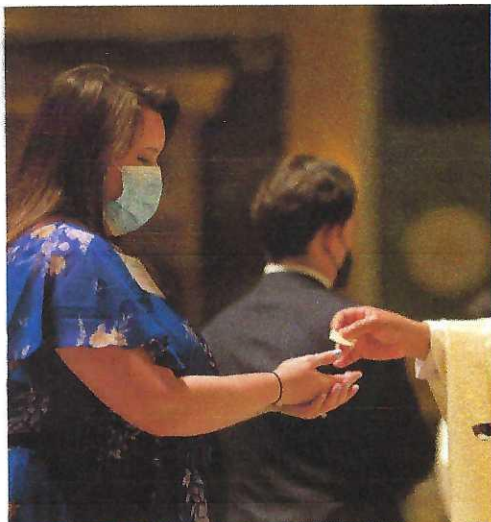
As we start to return to worship practices that were set aside, let us praise God for all those who helped to develop and who continue to administer the vaccines that seem to be working for the good of society.

It will be a special blessing to gather around the Lord's Altar as the Family of Faith that we are called to be. ”

Wilton Cardinal Gregory, Archbishop of Washington



COME HOME TO THE HEART OF COMMUNION



THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST... ...is a Responsibility and a Right

At the heart of our Catholic faith is the Sunday Eucharist. It is here that we come together as the Body of Christ to worship God. This is both a responsibility and a right – an obligation and an opportunity. With the decreasing number of Covid 19 cases and the availability of vaccines, we are poised to move forward as communities of faith gathered together around the Lord's Altar. As such, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is being reinstated beginning on Saturday, June 26, 2021 and Sunday, June 27, 2021. All healthy individuals are expected to attend Sunday Eucharist.

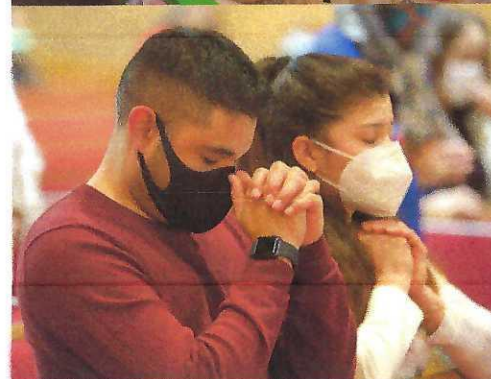
The bishops, in their statement, point out that “this obligation (to attend Mass) does not apply to those who are ill; those who have reason to believe that they were recently exposed to the coronavirus, (or) another serious or contagious illness; those who are confined to their home, a hospital, or nursing facility; or those with serious underlying health conditions.” They also suggested “one should consult his or her local pastor if questions arise about the obligation to attend Mass.”



...Unites Us More Closely with Christ and One Another

The return to the in-person celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a great gift to us! The pandemic kept us from full and active participation in the Eucharist. When we join Mass remotely, we are fed by the Word of God, and this has been extremely helpful throughout this time of pandemic. However, we could not partake of Jesus in the Eucharist due to pandemic safety restrictions. While we longed for the Eucharist, Jesus longed even more for each of us. He desires most ardently to become one with us in the most Holy Eucharist.

United with Christ, we are also united with one another as brothers and sisters. Seeing, touching, receiving the Eucharist strengthens our bond of love with Christ and his Mystical Body, the Church. Coming together to worship at the Lord's Table renews and strengthens us in Christian charity to bring the beauty of the Gospel to the world.



...Allows Us To Welcome Each Other Home

We were incomplete when we had to remain apart. As the Body of Christ, we are less when you are not with us. Feasting together in the Eucharist is uniquely human and Catholic - this relationship is the heart of our community. We long to welcome you home to the heart of Communion!

For more information visit cathstan.org/news/local/catholics-encouraged-to-return-to-public-mass-as-archdiocese-of-washington-announces-lifting-of-dispensation-from-obligation-to-attend-mass-beginning-june-26-and-27