



The Shell

An e-letter for

Saint James the Greater Church,
3565 Hubble Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247

May 17, 2021

Mass Obligation Reinstated

Since last spring, the obligation for all Catholics to participate in Mass on Sundays and holy days was dispensed because of the Covid 19 pandemic. All the bishops of Ohio joined in this action in response to suggestions from public health officials. Now all the bishops have decided that this dispensation will end on June 6.

Beginning with the weekend of June 5 & 6 the obligation to participate in Mass on Sundays and holy days is reinstated. All Catholics are again required to participate in Sunday and holy days Masses **in person**. Many people have gotten used to viewing Mass by live-stream or television during these past months. **Watching live-stream or television does not fulfill the obligation. The obligation requires in-person participation.**

Since our guidance throughout this pandemic has been to follow the regulations of public health authorities, there will be no mask mandate for churches of the archdiocese after the statewide mandate is lifted (currently scheduled for June 2, per Governor DeWine's announcement).

We have slowly seen an increase in the number of people at Sunday Masses. We have removed the ropes that created the social distancing. Our choirs have returned. We are looking forward to reinstating other aspects of our worship during the coming weeks. But nothing is as important as all our parishioners gathering for Mass. While we have an obligation to participate in Mass, it is our greatest privilege to do so. It is also the source and summit of our faith lives. The connection we have with God in the Mass motivates us more than an obligation in law.

I know many of our parishioners have longed to return to Mass. Some may not feel totally comfortable without a mask. That's OK. Some might want to choose a less crowded Mass and sit away from other people. That's OK. The time has come for everyone to come back to our religious home. It is safe. It is spiritually necessary for all of us.

For your information from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Sunday obligation

2180 The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." (Canon Law 1247) "The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated

anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day." (Canon Law 1248)

2181 The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor.^(Canon Law 1245) Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.

God bless all of you.

Father Nolker