



*I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life (John 8:12).*

March 16, 2022

To: All Clergy, Religious, Directors of Liturgy

From: Bishop John Noonan

Re: Dispensation of Mass on Sunday

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Grace and Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you this Lenten Season. Know that I pray with gratitude for each one of you as you flourish God's Kingdom. The question of lifting the dispensation of the obligation to participate in the celebration of Mass on Sundays and other holy days of obligation established for the safety of people during the pandemic has been discussed most recently with a greater fervor.

The psalmist today says our trust is in the Lord and we know of His everlasting kindness which we experienced as the pandemic proceeded. During this Lenten season, we ache with longing to return to the Lord, both individually and as a community. This longing is most wonderfully fulfilled through our participation in the Eucharistic Feast on Sunday. For we know that participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and being faithful to Christ and to His Church (CCC 2182).

Effective Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022, the obligation to participate in the Eucharist in person on Sundays and other holy days of obligation is restored. During the pandemic, God gently prompts us of our care for each other by refraining from gathering when ill or in the care of someone who is ill. It is important to remind your parishioners that the Church has always excused those who are sick or care for infants or the elderly from this obligation. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.

The Palm Sunday date was chosen to give you and your staff adequate time to prepare for the lifting of this dispensation.

I will write a letter for distribution to the people on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 27 through the various diocesan communication channels. You will also receive a copy for your own distribution, should you choose to do so.

May our actions and desires follow Christ that we might have the light of life.