



**BISHOP OF GARY**

October 22, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Diocese of Gary, along with the other four dioceses in the State of Indiana, is extending the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation until further notice. This is due to the increase of Covid-19 cases in our state. The Indiana bishops will continue to monitor the situation to determine when it might be advisable to modify or lift the dispensation.

I'm grateful that all of our parishes are open for public worship and committed to keeping our churches safe for gathering. Over the last six months, our parishes have followed safety protocols recommended by public health officials and designed for the public celebration of Mass, including face coverings, social distancing, and enhanced sanitizing. I commend our pastors, pastoral staff and volunteers who have gone to great lengths to assure the safety of the faithful as they worship in our churches.

If you have not returned to Mass recently, I encourage you to contact your local parish to ask questions and learn how well the various safety protocols have been working over these last six months.

The Sunday celebration of the Mass is at the core of our expression of faith. Attending Mass in person is where we receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Being dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not mean people should stay away from church or fail to keep holy the Lord's Day. If you are healthy, not in a risk category, and not caring for a person in a risk category, then the normal practice of attending Mass should continue.

In the climate of the pandemic, each person must prayerfully consider his or her individual situation. The continued dispensation is a helpful measure since a number of the faithful may still find it difficult to fulfill the obligation during this time. Those who are not able to attend in person should consider how they will honor the Lord's Day. It is the Catholic tradition that Sunday is also kept holy by refraining from work, increasing our love of the Lord and extending charity to others through prayer and service.

If you are not able to attend Sunday Mass in person, I hope you will join your parish community spiritually. Most parishes offer livestream coverage of Sunday Mass (*for a listing: [www.dcgary.org](http://www.dcgary.org)*). Please be assured that your pastor and parish community, along with myself and all of the faithful gathered in public worship throughout Northwest Indiana, are holding you in prayer.

There is no limit on the love of Jesus and the power of the Eucharist. ***"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."*** (Heb 13:11)

Thank you for keeping me in your prayers and know of my love and prayers for you. If I can pray for you specifically, please share your request through the diocesan website ([www.dcgary.org](http://www.dcgary.org)) or by email [pray@dcgary.org](mailto:pray@dcgary.org).

Jesus, I trust in you...

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

Your Servant,

The Most Reverend Robert J. McClory  
Bishop of Gary