

Decree lifting general dispensation

May 7, 2021 | [Health, Public Health Concerns](#)

Lifting the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on days of precept, and abrogating requirements, restrictions, and special allowances of previous DECREES for the COVID-19 pandemic

Whereas the number of COVID-19 positive cases has reportedly stabilized at low numbers throughout our region, and that there are reportedly sufficient medical resources to treat patients who become sick; and

Whereas the availability of government-approved vaccines for the novel coronavirus are reportedly sufficient to inoculate those desiring it; and

Whereas the State of Missouri and the officials of the various counties throughout the diocese have lifted or sharply reduced their requirements and restrictions with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas the importance of the celebration of the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life, demands in-person attendance on days of precept whenever possible (cf. canon 1248 §1); and

Whereas having consulted the Bishops of the St. Louis Province on this matter at our meeting of 4 May 2021;

I therefore declare, as the Diocesan Bishop, the following:

1. The general dispensation of previous decrees from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and other days of precept is hereby abrogated. Individuals who are symptomatic, or who have been advised by medical doctors to avoid public gatherings, or who are otherwise ill or homebound, as well as their caregivers, are already dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass (cf. canon 1248 §2).

2. Those who are symptomatic for COVID-19 should not be permitted to enter church properties, in accordance with national, state, and local health guidance.
3. The continuance of certain special protocols during the pandemic should be continued at the discretion of the pastor (the daily cleaning of high-contact surfaces and holy water fonts; the availability of hand sanitizer and use by ministers of Holy Communion; the observance of social distancing whenever possible; etc.). The wearing of facemasks is still encouraged, especially for those who have not been fully vaccinated.
4. Livestreaming of parish Masses and other important events has proven to be an effective pastoral means of keeping homebound and ill parishioners in contact with their parish community. Parishes are highly encouraged to continue this service in the future.
5. The offertory procession, the taking up of the collection during Mass, the sign of peace, and the offering of the Precious Blood to the faithful may resume at the discretion of the pastor, administrator, or parish life collaborator, effective immediately.
6. All legitimate national, state, or local health directives must be observed. Parishes and Catholic institutions in the diocese must stand ready to adopt previous pandemic protocols in the event of a surge of infections.

All other requirements, restrictions, or special allowances contained in previous decrees regarding the pandemic are hereby abrogated.

This decree is effective from 1 June 2021, unless otherwise indicated.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Most Rev. W. Shawn McKnight
Bishop of Jefferson City