

October 16, 2020

My Dear Parishioners,

Greetings in the Lord! In March, as the deaths from COVID 19 were rising, the Archbishop lifted the obligation to attend Holy Mass and all public Masses were suspended. Since the month of May, we have been blessed to celebrate public Masses. Thank you for being so accommodating to all of the regulations and adjustments these past 5 months. Just yesterday, we have been informed that **the obligation to attend Mass is not being reinstated** on November 1st.

However, as your pastor, I want to reinvite you back at Mass. Just as many of you have returned to Kroger, soccer, football games and many other activities, you are welcome and encouraged to attend Mass. If you have a health condition, feel sick or are an immediate caregiver to someone who is sick, do not feel any guilt or pressure to come, but if you are healthy, please come!

I would like to make a few comments about why you should return to Mass:

- 1- Love does not need an obligation. We should long for bodily communion, spiritual union and intimacy with God! This desire is not an obligation, but a holy longing. A married man and woman, out of love and a desire within them, express themselves in the marital embrace (married sex), not out of obligation, but love.
- 2- God gave us the obligation to Worship Him for His Glory but also for our good. God knows that we as humans thrive and live life to the full when we take time to rest, for silence, to hear His Word and receive His Body and Blood. We are human-beings not human-doings. We were not created to go-go-go. We were made for rest in Him. So, the obligation to rest and pray is given to us from a God Who is Love and desires us to thrive.
- 3- The reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus is REAL and needed. Jesus is insistent in scripture that “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you do not have life within you.” (John 6:53). We cannot have eternal life without Jesus. Watching Mass on television or via the internet does give you the grace of hearing God’s Word and the ability to make a spiritual communion, but nothing can compare with actual reception of our Lord.
- 4- We need community! We were not made to be alone. The book of Genesis clearly manifests the reality that communion and union are a must. Being

with others, seeing others, hearing other's voices is important- we are the Body of Christ. In a world of isolation, being with others is powerful.

5- Beauty and truth are related. When you enter a sacred place, when you see a Mass celebrated with reverence and intentionality your mind and heart are moved by beauty to Christ who is the Truth. Coming to Church and being at Mass brings you into union with God, just by being there and being receptive.

Come back to Mass. God wants you here, the angels and saints want you here, your parish community wants you here, I want you here! Be Apostles of the Eucharist, by encouraging others, who are healthy, to come back!

Here is a short story to reinforce the importance of Mass, especially for families! *A father who had long given up the practice of his faith had a son of fourteen years of age who had just received his confirmation with sincere piety. The father loved spending time with his son. Shortly after the son's confirmation the father approached him on Sunday morning, saying he should get ready, for they were to go out together to hunt all day. The boy replied, "Dad, I must go to Mass first." At this the father seemed peeved, and he replied, "Oh, you need not go to Mass anymore; you are getting old enough to have more freedom." Now the boy appeared hurt, and asked: "Dad, does not the Third Commandment say: Remember to keep holy the Sabbath?" "Third Commandment, nothing," answered the irate father; "that does not mean anything." The boy gravely looked up at his father and said solemnly: "Dad, if the third commandment does not mean anything, then the Fourth Commandment which says: 'Honor your Father and Mother' does not count either. If I do not have to honor God, I do not have to honor you, right?" At this utterance the father grew frustrated. He feared if he would not give-in, he would lose his hold on his son. He therefore said cautiously" "Well, maybe it is better that you go to Mass; and I will go with you."*

I write this because I desire what is best for you and your family; all the commandments matter and are related to each other. Going to Mass, going to Mass as a family, works and is important!

Once again if you are sick, vulnerable, or genuinely scared then please do not come, but if you are out and about at school, Kroger, soccer games, etc. Please come back. Please come to God! I write this for those who need a small push or encouragement. God loves you and desires your heart!

Know my door is open and my email is always answered- let me know if I can help!

Some things to remember about our public Masses:

~We are following all the protocols asked of us to keep you safe at our indoor Masses: social distancing, face coverings, disinfecting etc. We are limited with our seating capacities inside our churches (about 150 people), but are providing over-flow seating in our halls with the ability to receive Holy Communion in the Church.

~ We are intentionally celebrating 2 Masses outside every weekend (9:15 and 11am) to create a safe environment where social distancing can easily take place and the open-air is around us. As I have said again and again, if you feel safe on your front or back porch, you should feel safe at our outdoor Masses.

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In His Service,

Fr. Jonathan Meyer



Forming the saints God is calling us to be by providing faithful teaching, authentic worship, and compassionate service. Our faith and actions nourish engaged Catholics, inspire unengaged Catholics, and invite all to Christ's Church.