



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIOCESE**  
**OF CHARLESTON**  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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May 2021

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The time will soon come when we may return to public worship without fear of the coronavirus, and so effective June 5, when we celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi, the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass will end.

Individual dispensation, for those who are still at risk of grave illness and for their caretakers, will remain in place. These include but are not limited to caring for the sick, homebound, or infirm, those who exhibit flu-like symptoms or who are in the high-risk category.

We closed our churches and schools in March 2020 because it was the responsible thing to do, and it was important to follow local, state, and national health ordinances. We were able to resume public worship with safety precautions in place in May, and our Catholic schools opened for in-person instruction in the fall. We have learned how to live with this virus and to find a way through it together.

I am grateful to all of you for the patience and generosity you demonstrated during this difficult year, and it is our goal to make public worship accessible to everyone while still providing options for distancing and safety. Because we will be dealing with it for many years to come, it is important for everyone 12 year of age or older receive the vaccinations which are now available, both for the health of our communities and our shared life in the faith. It is not sinful in any way to receive any of the three COVID-19 vaccines.

As Catholics, we attend Mass to gather as a community that believes in Christ Jesus, and especially to receive our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist. It is the source and summit of the Christian faith and life. I pray that you and your family will be restored and nourished by returning to the Table of the Lord.

Please pray for your priests who have worked so diligently throughout this pandemic and know that my prayers remain with you and your families.

In the Lord's Peace,

Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmo, DD  
*Bishop of Charleston*

For additional details on dispensations, please visit [charlestdiocese.org/returning-to-the-table](https://charlestdiocese.org/returning-to-the-table).