



Archdiocese of Vancouver
ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE

DECREE

for the Reinstatement of the Obligation to Participate in the Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation

The Sacred Liturgy, “the source and summit of the Christian life,”¹ is the very heart of our Catholic faith. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is an irreplaceable gift – a foretaste of Heaven itself. Being unable to gather together to worship on Sundays has been a great trial to disciples of Jesus and members of the Catholic community.

When the pandemic began, the Public Health Officer suspended all public Liturgies. Even when smaller Masses with a limited congregation were permitted, I continued the dispensation from the Sunday obligation. During the difficult months of the pandemic, our pastors, parishes, and the faithful adapted to this situation in order to ensure the health and well-being of parishioners. I offer my sincere gratitude for the efforts that were undertaken to implement and maintain the precautionary measures that kept our parishes and schools safe.

Many parishes live-streamed Masses over the Internet during the past year. While this means helped Catholics nourish their spiritual life when they could not be present for Mass, this practice cannot become the norm. The Son of God did not come to us virtually. He came to us – and continues to come to us – in the flesh. As Catholics, direct contact with the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Our Lord in offering the redeeming Sacrifice is irreplaceable.

In gratitude for the providential lessening of the danger to public health caused by the pandemic and for the good of souls, it is with joy that I hereby restore the Sunday obligation for Catholics starting Saturday, July 17, 2021.² This obligation is not a burden, for it brings life to our spirit and nourishes our relationship with Jesus Christ.

4885 Saint John Paul II Way | Vancouver, BC | V5Z 0G3
Telephone: 604 443-3203 | Facsimile: 604 681-8355

rcavbishop@rcav.org

As has always been the case, anyone with a “serious reason” or “grave cause” is excused from this obligation. In the case of the coronavirus pandemic, such reasons include:

- anyone who is sick, symptomatic, or has been recently exposed to the coronavirus;
- anyone with significant health risk factors that requires them to avoid public spaces
- anyone who cares for someone with significant risk factors;
- anyone who cannot attend Mass through no fault of their own because of frailty or old age.

May the return to the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist deepen our devotion and reclaim Sunday as a day of worship, leisure, and time for family and friends.³

Given at Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on this Memorial of Saint Henry, the Thirteenth Day of July, in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Twenty-One.



+ J. Michael Miller CSB
Most Reverend J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver

B. Dowding

Mrs. Barbara Dowding
Chancellor

¹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 11; cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1324

² Code of Canon Law, canon 1245; cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2181.

³ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 2184-2186