

Office of the Bishop

DECREE

Whereas on March 16, 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, all Catholics within the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph were dispensed from the obligation to participate in Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation; and

Whereas the number of COVID-19 positive cases and hospitalizations has reportedly stabilized at low numbers throughout our twenty-seven counties specifically and across our boarder regions as well, and that there are reportedly sufficient medical resources to treat patients who become sick; and

Whereas the availability of government approved and morally permissible 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 and/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 participating attendance on Sundays and holy days of obligation whenever possible (cf., canon 1248, §1); and

Whereas a dispensation is to cease with the cessation of the motivating cause (canon 93); and

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

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

- The *general* dispensation of previous decrees and directives from the obligation to participate in Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation 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). For further guidance, contact your pastor after reviewing <https://kcsj catholic.org/2021/05/info-dispensation/> or, in accord with canon 1245, any priest with diocesan faculties who may grant a dispensation in individual cases.

Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph at The Catholic Center

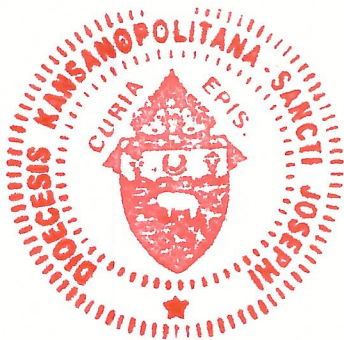
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- Those who are symptomatic for COVID-19 should not be permitted to enter church properties, in accordance with national, state and local health guidance.
- The special diocesan liturgical directives and protocols promulgated during the pandemic from March 2020 through April 21, 2021 are abrogated. At the discretion of the pastor, local decisions on safety procedures may continue.
- Per paragraph 24 of the *Norms for the Distribution of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds*, and as communicated to the priests and deacons on May 14, 2021, the Precious Blood and chalice is not to be extended to the faithful at this time. Concelebrant and deacon reception of the Precious Blood continues to be locally determined in consultation with the Pastor.
- Livestreaming of parish Masses, other liturgies and important events has proven to be an effective pastoral means of keeping homebound and ill parishioners, and family members who could not travel, in contact with their parish community and parish rites. Parishes are highly encouraged to continue this service in the future; but, in general, only one of the weekend Masses is to be livestreamed so as not to inhibit Catholic belief in one's own personal, real presence at Mass. A singular weekly Mass outreach and ritual milestone event experience (e.g., funerals, weddings, graduations) livestreamed are a virtuous good in service provided but not one to be offered so often and frequent to the neglect of the remaining services being in-person encounters.
- 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.

Given at the diocesan chancery
the 20th of May 2021
Kansas City, Missouri.



+ James V. Johnston, Jr.

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.
Bishop of Kansas City – St. Joseph

Kenneth A. Riley

Very Reverend Kenneth A. Riley
Vicar General - Chancellor