

Come HOME

TO COMMUNION

Frequently Asked Questions

If you are faithfully participating in Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, our FAQs can be helpful in encouraging a friend, family member or neighbor who has not yet returned to Sunday Mass.

What's wrong with watching Mass online?

Watching and participating in Mass by watching on a computer, tv or mobile device screen is ok in an emergency situation—like, a global pandemic. Now that Bishop Johnston has lifted the general dispensation though, purposely or intentionally skipping Mass without a serious reason (such as illness, bad weather, or the care of infants or loved ones who are ill and cannot be left alone) is a grave sin. Here's why...we Catholics rightfully speak about, and rejoice in, the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, “Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity” (cf. John 6:52-58). But there is another real presence that is necessary at every celebration of Mass—ours! Our full, conscious, and active participation in the Sacred Liturgy begins with our physical presence at Mass. The Sunday celebration of Mass is also the source of our communion and community life together in all our parishes.

Who is still excused from participating in Mass in person?

Bishop Johnston has extended a particular dispensation to anyone who continues to be in a vulnerable health situation as well as those who care for them. The Catechism of the Catholic Church also excuses anyone who is ill, caring for a very young infant or is dispensed by their pastor. Contact your local priest for more information on who is excused.



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I haven't been to Mass in over a year. Where do I start?

There are at least five minimum requirements or precepts for practicing Catholics:

- Attend Mass and avoid manual labor on Sundays and holy days of obligation.
- Confess your sins at least once a year.
- Receive the sacrament of the Eucharist during the Easter season.
- Observe the days of abstinence and fasting established by the Church.
- Help provide for the needs of the Church through your time, talent and treasure.

[Consider sharing Bishop Johnston's blog post, Doing the Catholic Minimum found at: <https://kcsjatholic.org/2019/09/doing-the-catholic-minimum/>]

I just don't get anything out of Mass—what's the point?

Think of participating in Mass as something we owe to God. We owe Him worship through thanks, praise, adoration and love. God is owed all these things because first, He brought us into existence, and second, He gave Himself up unto death to redeem us. As creatures we owe God...big time! That is God's due, and in fact, we come right out and say that within the Mass at the beginning of the Preface, during the dialogue between the priest and the people. The priest says, "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God," and the people respond, "It is right and just". Indeed, it is right and just, for we creatures owe God, our Creator and Redeemer. When this becomes our primary purpose (interestingly enough) we end up "getting more" out of Mass.

This is not to say that our being personally fed and nourished at Mass is not important; it is. Our liturgies should be beautiful; the homily should apply the Word of God to our lives. We should experience the friendship and love of the community gathered. But these things flow from our first and most important reason to be there—to worship God in the way He desires.

[Consider sharing Bishop Johnston's blog post, Making Mass More Meaningful found at: <https://kcsjatholic.org/2018/06/making-mass-meaningful/>]

[more]

Is everyone invited to Come Home to Communion?

Communion can mean different things when we talk about the Catholic Mass. Communion is coming together in “community” with our parish and all who come to gather to share in the Eucharistic liturgy—the rich and the poor, the aged and the young, persons of all walks of life. It is the weekly family reunion when we gather around the table to share in the Lord’s Supper around an altar of sacrifice. All are welcome to be fully present in the Catholic Mass.

Holy Communion is the reception of the Eucharistic Body and Blood of Jesus Christ—for example, when young children make their First Communion, they receive the Body and Blood of Jesus for the first time. Catholics believe that the bread and wine are transubstantiated during the Eucharistic prayer—meaning they literally become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. This is a sacred experience, and it’s not appropriate for everyone to receive Holy Communion. It’s important to understand what the Catholic Church teaches about who should receive the Body and Blood of Christ during Mass. This teaching is not intended to exclude anyone, but to protect individuals from committing grave sin, and preserve the integrity of our belief about the Eucharist.

[*Consider sharing* The Who Can Receive Holy Communion Total Explainer *found at:* <https://www.pillaratholic.com/p/the-who-can-receive-holy-communion>]

Are Catholic churches still requiring masks and social distancing?

It depends on which parish you'll be visiting to participate in Mass. Some still require masks, especially if they are in counties or cities which still have a mask mandate. Others do not require masks, but have a designated area for those who still wish to socially distance and wear masks during Mass. Your best bet is to call the parish office where you would like to go to Mass and they can let you know what their current guidelines are.

[more]

I have young children who are not vaccinated - is it safe for them to be at Mass?

The Pfizer vaccine is now available to all children age 12 and older at most pharmacies and the Church encourages parents to vaccinate all eligible family members. For children who are not vaccinated, masks and hand washing have proven to be an effective option to protect them from contracting COVID-19.

Consideration of the long term effect of COVID-19 on children is certainly prudent, but medical research has consistently shown that children have [a very low risk](#) of being hospitalized (0.1%-1.9%) or dying (0.00%-0.03%) from COVID-19.

It is important to also consider the impact on a child's spiritual health from exclusively participating in Mass online, keeping them and their parents from receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, and the message it sends them when we prioritize isolation to protect our physical health over the physical and spiritual healing power of Jesus Christ.

Statistically, children are at a greater risk of injury or death from riding in the car than they are from contracting COVID-19. If you did not keep your children from movie theaters or restaurants during flu season, which also carries a higher risk of serious illness or death in children than COVID-19, you can feel safe in bringing them back to full participation in Mass.

Children under the age of 7 are already dispensed from Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation. Once a child has received his/her First Communion they also have a duty and a right to attend Mass on Sunday and holy days. Consider leaving young children with a family member or babysitter while the adults and vaccinated children attend Mass, or have older children continue to wear a mask to Mass until they can get vaccinated.

Consult with your pediatrician or another trusted medical professional with specific concerns about the risk to your child.