



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In March of 2020, the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories issued for the people of their respective dioceses a dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation. We did this with the intent of safeguarding the health and well-being of the faithful in the midst of the global pandemic. The dispensation gave to our faithful the freedom to choose not to participate in person in large liturgical gatherings, and thus help to prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus. At the same time, we encouraged our faithful to maintain bonds of spiritual communion by participating in liturgical actions available through electronic means.

With the significant lessening in recent months of pandemic danger both provincially and globally, we are now at a stage where the necessity of maintaining the dispensation has receded. Accordingly, the Bishops of Alberta and Northwest Territories will lift the dispensation as of Pentecost Sunday, June 5, 2022. Each bishop will issue a decree to this effect in their respective dioceses.

Participation in Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation is a duty that is at once sacred and joyful. It springs from the commandment to keep holy the Sabbath Day. In the Christian tradition, the Sabbath is Sunday, when we celebrate with joy the victory of the Risen Christ over death. Regular celebration of Sunday Mass gives to our lives right order, it builds and reinforces our communion with and in Christ, it places the worship of God before all else and orients us toward our ultimate destiny in Christ.

With you, we rejoice in the return to gathering in person to worship God at Sunday Mass, and to living the Sabbath fully with our parish community, family, and friends. It is our hope that the fulfillment of our sacred duty to worship God on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will spur us along the path of spiritual renewal. At the same time, acknowledging the continuing presence of Covid-19 in our midst, we encourage anyone showing signs of the illness, and vulnerable persons, to avail themselves of the means of spiritual communion that will continue to be available for some time still.

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May the celebration of Pentecost Sunday inspire us to rejoice in worshipping the Lord always. “Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.”

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton