



DIOCESE OF BEAUMONT

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Beaumont, April 23, 2021

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Last year on March 18, 2020, as we began dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, my predecessor, the Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillory, after much prayer and consultation with his Brother Bishops, his Priests' Council and in an abundance of caution and concern for the welfare of the community, issued a dispensation for all Catholics within the Diocese of Beaumont from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice.

During the following months, Masses were celebrated without a congregation present, and many participated in Sunday Mass by watching via livestream and making a spiritual communion. Even after we began the re-opening our churches on May 20, 2020, as people began returning to attending Mass in person, the dispensation remained in place, waiting for clarity and confidence that the overall risk associated with the virus was diminished.

That time has now come as the COVID-19 vaccine has been more widely administered and the number of cases has substantially diminished in recent weeks. It is apparent that circumstances now allow almost all Catholics to attend Mass safely. Therefore, beginning May 22, 2021, as we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will be lifted in the Diocese of Beaumont.

Thus, the feast of the birthday of the Church also symbolizes for us the re-birth of the Church in Southeast Texas! It is now time for us to once again be nourished by the Eucharist and strengthened by the community. We need Jesus and we need each other! However, please note that the Church always provides exceptions for those who are sick or otherwise unable to attend Sunday Mass (see attached decree).

Jesus said, "I am the living bread come down from Heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." (John 6:51) As Catholics, we gladly return to the altar of God to receive the Bread of Life from the one who gives healing and joy to our hearts.

Please be assured of my prayers for you as I encourage all the faithful to continue to cooperate with parish guidelines and protocols for COVID-19 (including the wearing of masks until the pandemic further diminishes) during this time of transition.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. David L. Foups, S.Th.D.

Bishop of Beaumont

Location: 710 Archie Street ~ Beaumont, TX 77701-2899

Mail: P.O. Box 3948 ~ Beaumont, TX 77704-3948

Tel: 409-924-4300 ~ www.dioceseofbmt.org



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With Christian joy and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the time has come for Catholics to return to worship God at Mass on Sundays.

Whereas on March 19, 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, all Catholics within the Diocese of Beaumont were dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice;

Whereas ecclesiastical law specifies that one of the ways that Catholics are normally obliged to keep holy the Lord's Day is by participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

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

Whereas the number of cases of COVID-19 has decreased significantly in recent weeks, allowing social and communal activities to resume while maintaining adequate safety precautions.

Now therefore, I, the Most Reverend David Leon Toups, Bishop of Beaumont, do hereby withdraw the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, effective on the Solemnity of Pentecost Sunday, May 22, 2021, beginning with the Saturday anticipated Masses the evening before, while maintaining until withdrawn a particular dispensation for those who might feel grave discomfort and fall into the following categories:

1. Those 65 years of age or older;
2. Those at risk for severe illness due to underlying medical conditions as described by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
3. Those who care for the sick, homebound, or infirmed;
4. Those women who are pregnant;

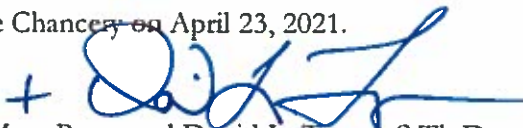
The following persons do not need a dispensation because they are always excused from attending Mass (can. 1248):

- Those who are currently ill, including those who have a fever or exhibit flu-like symptoms;
- Those who have good reason to think they might be asymptomatic of a contagious illness (e.g., those who were in recent contact with someone who tested positive for a contagious illness such as COVID or influenza).

In those cases where a person may not be dispensed or excused from the obligation to attend Mass in one of the above categories but may have significant fear or anxiety of becoming ill by being at Mass, such persons should speak to their parish priest, who may grant a dispensation in individual cases per canon 1245 of the Code of Canon Law.

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Given at the Chancery on April 23, 2021.


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Most Reverend David L. Toups, S.Th.D
Bishop of Beaumont


Dr. David Castronovo, JD, JCD
Chancellor