



Roman Catholic Diocese of Lubbock

FROM BISHOP ROBERT M. COERVER

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Bishop Coerver reinstates Sunday Mass Obligation starting April 2 and 3, 2022

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph. Two years ago, on this feast, we had just entered into our desert of isolation and darkness caused by the COVID pandemic. We did so at the insistence of civil authorities and following the best advice of medical and scientific authorities available then.

In the course of the two years, we have learned a lot about the Coronavirus and what does and does not contribute to its spread. And we have reached a point where we better understand precautions that are helpful and how we can keep one another and ourselves safe.

Therefore, as our Lenten journey progresses, I think it appropriate that we prepare to gather again as communities of faith and celebrate the most sacred days of the Church Year as we approach Holy Week and our joyful celebration of Easter.

And so, I am reinstating the obligation to participate in person at the celebration of the Eucharist, to attend Mass, on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation beginning the first weekend of April — April 2 and 3.

Of course, if you are not feeling well – or have a medical condition that makes it dangerous for you to return to church and be physically present — by Church law, the obligation does not bind you.

That particular weekend is one weekend before Palm Sunday and two weekends before Easter. I am hopeful that we will be able to grow increasingly more comfortable being physically present in church as we arrive at the most solemn feast of the Church Year, the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

May our gathering for Easter this year be a particular cause for joy in our parishes and in our homes.

Please invite family members, friends, neighbors, anyone whom you believe might benefit from sharing with us as we gather during Passiontide – the 14 days before Easter — as we enter into the week called Holy, beginning with Palm Sunday and continuing through our celebrations of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

And let's rejoice at God's favor shown us by his saving grace provided us in Jesus our Redeemer, risen from the dead. That saving grace is our source of consolation and hope as we continue to emerge from the pandemic, many with sorrow at losses experienced, others still impacted physically by the disease itself, and all of us somewhat traumatized by the last two years.

Easter joy and grace can provide us with new life as we leave the desert and enter into a springtime of new life inspired by Easter Hope.

Please come back to church and experience the joy of being together again as together we experience anew the Church's sacramental life. Thank you and may God bless you!