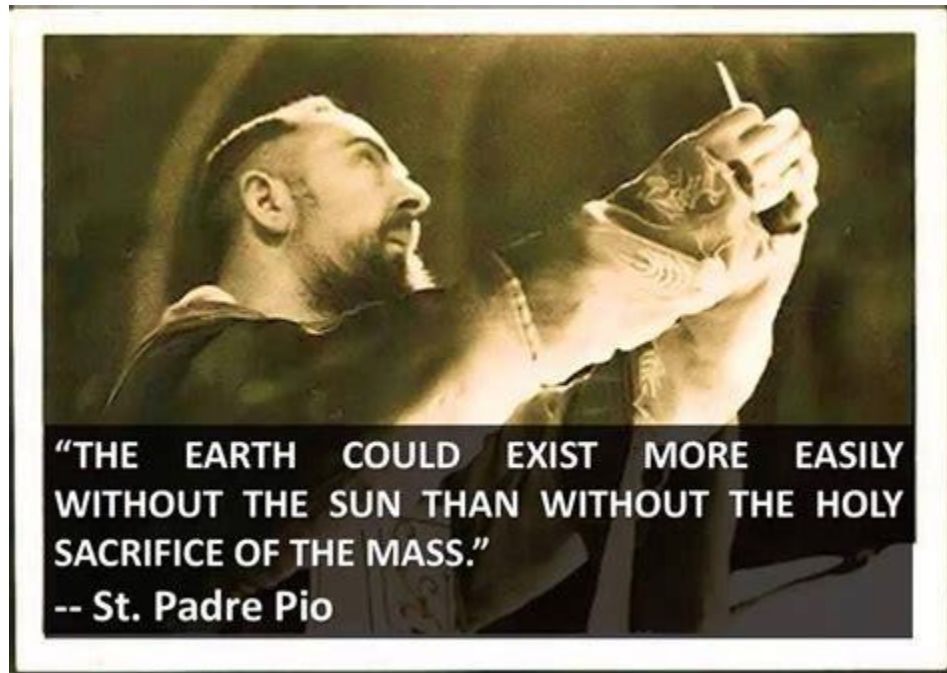


FROM FATHER JOHN: *"It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name, Most High, To proclaim your love at daybreak, your faithfulness in the night, With the ten-stringed harp, with melody upon the lyre. For you make me jubilant, LORD, by your deeds; at the works of your hands I shout for joy."* ~ Psalm 92

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name, Most High!!!



Is missing Sunday mass a mortal sin? Yes, it is. Bishop Hicks has announced that he is lifting the *Dispensation from the Obligation to Attend Sunday Mass*. This goes into effect on Palm Sunday, which is April 10, 2022. This means that, beginning on Palm Sunday, it will once again be a mortal sin to miss mass.

Ten years ago, a visitor to the parish I was assigned to came up to me after mass. He told me that he enjoyed the mass but that he had to chuckle at something I said in my homily. I asked him what made him laugh. And, he told me it was when I mentioned that missing Sunday mass is a mortal sin. I reiterated to him that "missing Sunday mass is a mortal sin." He replied, "no, it's not." I repeated that missing Sunday mass is a mortal sin. He again replied, "no, it's not" and then walked away. I have to tell you that I was completely shocked by this gentleman's cavalier attitude toward the importance of participating in mass on Sunday (or Saturday evening).

Evil exists in the world. We can readily see that in what is happening in Ukraine.

The sacred Scriptures and the teaching of the Church clearly teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Church, has given us the tools to resist evil, temptation, and sinful influences that lead to sin. These tools, or weapons, as Bishop Robert Barron says, *“are the sacraments (especially the Eucharist and Confession), the Mass, the Bible, personal prayer, the rosary, etc.”*

The mass is the most important thing we do all week long, that we will ever do in our lives, for the simple reason that it is the paramount means by which our Lord leads us to holiness and gives us the grace to resist evil and temptation.

Christ entrusts to his Church the memorial of his death and resurrection. During mass, we honor, witness and embrace the sacrifice that Christ made for all of us on the cross. The mass is where we gather as the Body of Christ in the world to offer our Lord and God praise and thanksgiving. It is when we come together during the mass that we receive a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet in the Eucharist and encounter our Risen Lord in Word and Sacrament.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that *“The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.”* (CCC #2180)

Our Pastor, the Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks, Bishop of Joliet, will no longer dispense the people of the Church of Joliet from the *Obligation to Attend Sunday* mass beginning on April 10th. The following is his announcement concerning the removal of the dispensation that has been in place for nearly two years.

“Dear Friends,

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic more than two years ago, our goal in the Diocese of Joliet has been to ensure the safety and well-being of all clergy, religious, lay ministers, parishioners, employees and volunteers while providing access to worship and the Eucharist. We have adjusted our safety protocols as COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations increased and then decreased. I want to personally thank you for your diligence in safeguarding the health of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

When the state of Illinois lifted its mask mandate for indoor public places on February 28, we followed suit for all church and office activities. We also

removed practically all other precautions, but left in place the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.

The time has come to remove that final provision, and we will do so on Palm Sunday. What better time for us all to come together again than Palm Sunday, which marks the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the beginning of Holy Week.

Of course, if individuals are ill or contagious to others, Canon law allows them to decide for themselves if they should attend Mass.

I am excited the Diocese of Joliet will fully reunite as one body in Christ for the liturgies leading up to Easter and beyond.

I am reminded of the words Pope Francis wrote in *Fratelli Tutti* during the initial months of the pandemic: "Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all."
(Paragraph 8)

Let us welcome home our family with joy and continue to pray for each other.

Paz y bien,
Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks
Bishop of Joliet"

