



Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

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Office of the Bishop

His Excellency
Steven John Raica
By the grace of God and the Apostolic See
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama

DECREE EXTENDING THE DISPENSATION FROM THE SUNDAY AND HOLY DAY MASS OBLIGATION DUE TO COVID-19

In accordance with canons 87 § 1 and 90 of the *Code of Canon Law*, I make the following provision, recognizing that infection rates for COVID-19 remain generally high in the territory of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama and that the dispensation I previously extended on June 24, 2020 shall soon expire, on September 6, 2020:

I hereby extend the dispensation from the obligation to assist at Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation through Sunday, November 22, 2020 (inclusive) – the last Sunday of the liturgical year – for all the Roman Catholic faithful who reside in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.

I exhort pastors, parish administrators, school principals, and other leaders of apostolates or ministries to continue exercising vigilance and caution in offering the sacraments and other church activities, following the safety guidelines I previously issued.

Recognizing that restrictions on public activities across different sectors of society have gradually been lifted over the past several months, as well as the need for us to recover a more normal rhythm of life even while taking precautions, I warmly challenge those who have not yet returned to the practice of the sacraments yet have assumed similar risks (such as eating out in restaurants, doing non-essential shopping, going to the beach or on other travel/vacations, visiting more with family and friends, etc.) to begin finding their way back to church also. We need the unique graces that the sacraments offer – now, more than ever.

The moral obligation of keeping the Lord's Day holy remains, even for those who use the dispensation and do not go to Mass. Let us sanctify the Christian Sabbath in our hearts and in our homes. Those who thus far have been unable to fulfill the "Easter Duty" (of confessing all mortal sins in number and kind and receiving Holy Communion worthily at least once a year, during the Lenten or Easter seasons) are urged to do so as soon as reasonably possible.

Given at the Diocesan Chancery in Birmingham on the 19th of August, the Memorial of Saint John Eudes, in the Year of the Lord 2020.

+ Steven John Raica

Most Reverend Steven J. Raica
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama

BW Jerabek

Very Reverend Bryan W. Jerabek
Chancellor

