

*A Statement on Return to Sunday Mass by the Roman Catholic Bishops
Of the Upstate New York Dioceses of Buffalo, Ogdensburg, Rochester and Syracuse*

Praise be to Almighty God who has been by our side throughout this long and devastating pandemic. He has heard our cries of mourning and been our rock in this stormy sea. He has delivered us through this crisis and brought us to the point where we can now clearly see an end in sight to the suffering, lockdowns, and isolation. Alleluia!

Today, with vaccination rates rising, infection numbers across the state are falling, and we are seeing the reopening of every sector of society, including businesses, restaurants, and sporting events. *Now is also time to return to Sunday Mass.*

The obligation to attend Holy Mass on the Lord's Day is a sacred one. Anyone who is frail or at risk due to advanced age or medical conditions is *always* excused from this obligation, and we encouraged you to use your prudential judgment throughout this pandemic to determine if it was unsafe for you to attend Mass. This remains true.

However, for those who are healthy and not at great risk, the presumption of the faithful should be that, unless they are at an enhanced risk, sick, or caring for others who are at risk or sick, *the obligation to attend Sunday Mass now resumes, effective the weekend of June 5-6, 2021, the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ in our dioceses.*

One should consult their local pastor if questions arise about the obligation to attend Mass. All required safety protocols and liturgical directives of each Diocese remain in place until modified or revoked by the respective Diocesan Bishop.

We are grateful to God to have reached this point, and we speak for all of our brother priests in saying we can't wait to see you again. *Come home to Mass!*

Most Rev. Michael W. Fisher, *Bishop of Buffalo*; **Most rev. Terry R. LaValley**, *Bishop of Ogdensburg*; **Most Rev. Salvatore Matano**, *Bishop of Rochester*; **Most Rev. Douglas J. Lucia**, *Bishop of Syracuse*.