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# SAINT JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC PARISH

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*We share your longing for more*

Dear St. John Paul II Parishioners,

Archbishop Naumann has chosen the Solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, the weekend of June 5 -6, 2021, as the occasion on which the dispensation from the obligation by the faithful to attend Mass shall be lifted. Beginning with Masses for that weekend, all the Catholic faithful residing within the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas must return to observing the precept of the Church to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Of course, those who suffer from underlying health concerns or compromised immunity, or who have genuinely serious concerns about the risk of contracting the coronavirus at Mass are not bound by the obligation to attend Mass.

The Health Order of the Johnson County Local Health Officer issued March 25, 2021 exempts churches from social distancing requirements. Beginning with the Masses on June 5-6, we will continue to provide socially distanced seating for one half of our congregation, while the other half will provide more chairs and closer seating. This will allow families to make choices for themselves regarding their health and comfort.

The Health Order also exempts churches from the requirement for wearing face masks. However, I would like to encourage all of our parishioners to continue to wear face masks as a gesture of good will and solidarity with those who are only able to attend Mass due to the prevalence of masks at Mass.

This return to the precept of obligation is an exceptional opportunity for us all to reflect on the necessity of the Eucharist in our lives. Catholics, of course, should always hunger for the Eucharist and long to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion, but especially now as local immunity increases and as we begin to depart from restrictions observed during the pandemic. As the Church solemnly teaches, the Eucharist is the summit of the Church's mission, and is the font from which all her power to serve God is derived. Archbishop Naumann will be writing about our true need for Holy Mass in his column in *The Leaven*, inviting the faithful to communal celebration of the Eucharist in our parishes.

Additionally, and as has always been the case, whether one is obligated to attend Mass or not, we are nonetheless obliged to observe the Third Commandment of our Lord to keep holy the Sabbath. The faithful who are unable to attend Mass should celebrate a liturgy of the Word in their home, using the Sunday readings; like all the faithful, they should refrain from unnecessary work and avoid unnecessary shopping, and should spend time in leisure, rest, and prayer with their families and loved ones.

Rev. John A. Riley  
Chancellor