



**Date:** 13 May 2021  
**Re:** UPDATE — Toward a New Normal

**Approved:** *+ Austin A. Veit*

*It has been a long 15 months as we have been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to pray for each other and make small sacrifices for the safety of those who are vulnerable. I know it has been difficult as things shift and change; I thank you for your charity and perseverance. It is a welcome sign of hope that active cases are currently down in Montana, and I pray that all our loved ones will soon be able to safely return to the activities and people they love. After consulting Bishop Warfel of the Diocese of Great Falls/Billings, and my Presbyteral Council and College of Consultors, I issue the following update to our directives, effective **June 5, 2021**:*

**The obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation will resume starting June 5, in time for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi. This does not apply to those who are vulnerable.** I ask that you discern, in your own conscience, whether or not you are vulnerable. Take time to pray and inform yourself well. Consult your doctor if you have doubts about your health. If you are vulnerable, then the dispensation from attending Mass remains.

Over these many months, it has become very apparent to me the value of us gathering together in our parish communities to celebrate the Eucharist together. We are a Eucharistic people and the sacraments shape who we are and who we are called to be. When we celebrate Mass, we acknowledge that the saving mystery of the Eucharist makes all the difference in our lives. Coming to Mass on Sunday is our deepest profession of faith. It reminds us that God is real, and that the resurrection is real. Coming to Mass on Sunday is an essential part of our faith. We need the Eucharist; we need each other. Mass places us face to face with our living God, personally and in a unique way. At Mass, Jesus really and actually comes to us. It is at Mass that we experience the saving mystery of Jesus Christ and His resurrected life in us.

I am so grateful that things are becoming increasingly safe and that we can return to Mass together and share, personally and communally, this most sacred encounter with Jesus.

**Parish Guidance Updated, effective June 5, 2021:**

Local Government directives which are more restrictive are to be followed by parishes within those jurisdictions.

- The following remain suspended:
  - Exchange of the sign of peace
  - Communion under the form of the Precious Blood.
- The following are modified or rescinded:
  - Masks, while no longer required, are encouraged.
  - Parishes may resume the use of holy water in their fonts.
  - The use of Hymnals, missalettes, etc. may resume.
  - In line with county directives, fellowship may occur after Mass.