



**DIOCESE OF WINONA-ROCHESTER
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

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June 3, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus tells His followers, "I am the bread of life... whoever eats this bread will live forever" (6:48, 51). For over 2000 years, Catholics have gathered together on the Lord's Day for the celebration of the Mass, during which ordinary bread and wine is consecrated and becomes Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Through sharing in the Eucharist, those in communion with Christ and His Church are intimately united with our Triune God. This heavenly food strengthens us to live out our faith in service to others.

Beginning the weekend of July 3-4, I, along with the other Bishops of Minnesota, will reinstate the obligation for Catholics to come to Mass on Sunday, or Saturday evening. Gathering together and sharing in the Eucharist is the primary way in which Catholics follow the Lord's command to keep holy the Sabbath. While there are occasions such as this past year where this obligation is dispensed, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass remains the center of our lives as Catholics.

As always, there are circumstances where individuals may not be obligated to go to Sunday Mass. If you are sick, a caregiver for children or the elderly, or are unable to attend Mass through no fault of your own (e.g., you are in a place where there is no Mass, or you do not have any means of transportation), then you are not obligated to come to Mass. Additional circumstances that may exempt you from attending Sunday Mass are outlined in the decree reimposing the Sunday obligation, and the statement from all the Bishops of the Minnesota Catholic Conference. If you have questions about your specific situation, you are encouraged to discuss them with your pastor.

It is with great joy that I look forward to gathering again with all the faithful of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester around the altar of the Lord. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives as Catholics, and it is where we encounter Christ Himself. May each one of us make the words of Psalm 122:1 our own: "I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Sincerely in Christ,

+John M. Quinn

Most Rev. John M. Quinn
Bishop of Winona-Rochester