

WILLIAM PATRICK

By the Grace of God and



the Favor of the Apostolic See

BISHOP OF LA CROSSE

DECREE

On the Dispensation from Mass on Holy Days of Obligation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Peace be with you my friends.

Much has happened these last eight months since my March 13, 2020 Decree suspending the obligation for the attendance of the Holy Mass on Sundays. While my prayers have always been for a speedy end to this pandemic it is clear that COVID-19 will continue to affect our communities and endanger our health. When I decreed the suspension of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass I did not envision the need to keep the suspension in place for so long and that it would be affecting our celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Christmas and Mary, Mother of God.

I am very happy that our churches are open and celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and I encourage those faithful, who without undue risk to their health and the health of their loved ones, to attend Mass praying continually for all who are affected by this virus directly or indirectly. I do believe that the suspension of the obligation to attend Mass is still serving a good purpose calming the hearts of many of our faithful who would struggle if the obligation were re-imposed at this time. The Commandment to keep holy the Sabbath and the central importance of the Mass to our faith has never and will never change but in this unique time of pandemic the obligation for attendance under the pain of mortal sin seems inappropriate not only for Sundays but for every day of obligation.

So I Decree that the obligation to attend the Holy Mass not just on Sundays but also on Holy Days of Obligation is suspended until further notice.

The upcoming Solemnities are at the heart of our faith. The wonderful celebration of the Immaculate Conception that points most powerfully to who the child to be born on Christmas truly is gives all of us hope that the promises of Christ will be ours. I ask that you keep these days holy. If you are able in a safe way, please attend Mass. If you have any underlying conditions, care for those who might be vulnerable or have concerns

about COVID-19 know that the obligation to attend in person is lifted but our need to celebrate these great Solemnities for our spiritual health has never been greater.

Given at the Office of the Bishop, Holy Cross Diocesan Center, at La Crosse this twenty-third day of November in the year of our Lord 2020, the feast of Saint Clement I, Pope and Martyr.



SEAL

Vener. William A. Oheim
Chancellor

William J. O'Connor
Bishop of La Crosse