



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII  
**DIOCESE OF HONOLULU**  
WITNESS TO JESUS

MEMORANDUM

To: All Pastors and Parishioners

From: Bishop Larry Silva

Date: March 5, 2021

Subject: Resumption of Sunday Mass Obligation

Peace be with you!

As we continue on our Lenten journey, we look forward to the joyful celebration of the Paschal Mystery, the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest event in the history of the world. We have been living in this strange time of the pandemic, and now with decreasing numbers of cases, increasing accessibility to vaccines, and “herd immunity” on the horizon, we should be able to celebrate Easter in a more normal fashion this year. Since our Sunday encounter with the Risen Lord in the Eucharist is the source and summit of who we are as Christians, it is important that we return to our weekly celebrations.

**Effective Easter Sunday, April 4 (or as of the Easter Vigil, April 3), I am ending the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, which has been in effect since mid-March, 2020. However, anyone who is sick, may have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19, or who has a health condition that would endanger themselves or others by being present in church, continues to be dispensed.**

In order to better accommodate larger numbers of people, especially on Easter Sunday, pastors are to determine whether extra seats can be added on lanais, additional Masses can be added to the schedule, or live-streaming in the parish hall can be done and Holy Communion taken to those who participate by this means.

If anticipated numbers simply cannot be safely accommodated in a particular parish, a pastor can dispense from the Sunday Mass obligation, either for individual parishioners or certain groups of parishioners, and for a specified period of time not to exceed two months without consultation with the Bishop of Honolulu.

At the same time, I realize that we must stay vigilant about our health protocols, and so the following norms must continue to be observed:

- Masks must be worn by all who attend Mass or other liturgical services.
- Social distancing and no-touch greetings and Sign of Peace remain the norms.

- Holy Communion is to be given only under the species of Bread.
- The use of a small choir is permitted during Holy Week and the Easter season. If the parish is using a choir, choir members need to continue following the rules for indoor singing as directed by the state [“Any person(s) singing shall maintain physical distancing of at least ten (10) feet from any other person(s) while singing. Members of the same performing group singing may be closer than ten (10) feet together while performing, provided the group consists of less than ten (10) persons. To the extent reasonable and practicable, a physical barrier (e.g., plexiglass) of sufficient size to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 shall separate any person(s) singing from any other person(s), but not including members of the same performing group.]
  - A distance of 10 feet between the cantor and the congregation needs to be observed as much as possible.
  - In addition to the Entrance, Offertory, Communion and Leavetaking hymns – the Kyrie, Gloria, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation and the rest of the Mass part responses could be sung during Holy Week and the Easter season, observing the proper precautions.
- Sanitization is to continue between Masses.
- Social gatherings after Mass should still not take place.
- We encourage parish priests to start/continue live-streaming their liturgies to their parishioners via social media platforms and to communicate to them the times of these services and log-in information for their parish’s Facebook and/or website.

Any questions about these protocols should be referred to Deacon Modesto Cordero of the Office of Worship: [mcordero@rcchawaii.org](mailto:mcordero@rcchawaii.org).

God bless you all, and have a blessed Lent, a joyful Easter Triduum, and a grace-filled Easter season!