



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 19, 2021

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Charlotte,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we prepare to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, I would like to take this opportunity to personally welcome you back to Mass and to a renewal of your spiritual life.

Our communities are beginning to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, but it will take time to heal from the pandemic's toll on people's health, welfare and economic well-being. I especially remember in my prayers the more than 7,000 people across the 46 counties of our diocese who have died from COVID-19, and the families and friends who grieve their loss.

I also give thanks for our pastors, parishes, ministry and school leaders, and all of the faithful who have adapted to protect the health and well-being of everyone in our local communities. Their creativity, patience and perseverance have helped keep our parishes and schools safe and enabled people to remain connected to their faith digitally when in-person interactions were not possible. Livestreamed Masses, online classes and messages, and video conferencing brought blessings to us all.

Yet it is in the Paschal Sacrifice that we receive the greatest blessing of all. God so deeply loves us that He gives us His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity truly present in the Eucharist. It is through our active participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that we are nourished and sanctified. Without the Mass, as we have witnessed over this past year, it has been challenging to stay focused on our spiritual lives. We know the Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic faith, our North Star, enabling us to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus and stay on the path toward eternal life in heaven.

Thus, it is fitting we emerge from the pandemic at Pentecost, renewed and emboldened to live our faith just as the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, shed their fear and went out with courage to preach the Gospel message "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Pentecost commemorates the birth of the Church and Her mission to the world, and for us marks a rebirth of our own mission as Christ's disciples.

Effective Pentecost Sunday, May 23, I am lifting the general dispensation from attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation for those who are not vulnerable to COVID-19, while particular dispensations remain for the sick and vulnerable as parishes transition back to more normal operations. Details have been shared with pastors and are [published online](#) and in the May 21 *Catholic News Herald*. If you have questions or concerns about returning to Mass, I encourage you to speak with your pastor.

As we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, take heart and remember the words of Our Lord: “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). God is indeed with us – always present in the Eucharist and eager to welcome us back into His Love. Let us make a special effort to do the same by inviting those who do not yet know the love of God to join us.

May the love and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be upon you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis, J.C.D.
Bishop of Charlotte