

What is a Dispensation from Mass?

A dispensation from the diocesan Bishop releases Catholics from fulfilling their Sunday obligation (Mass).

During this time of pandemic, Catholics in the Diocese of Rockford have been granted a dispensation from Mass for the weekends of March 15, 22, 29. For those who are older and more susceptible to the coronavirus, those who have compromised immune systems or have existing health problems, the Diocese of Rockford urges you and anyone else in your household with you, to please stay home from Mass and all public places as much as you can for your safety and the health and safety of others. Even though it may be a spiritual sadness for you not to participate in Mass, you should not feel guilty. You have a free conscience to stay home. Catholics are encouraged to offer up their hardship, sickness or pastoral care for the sake of those who are seriously ill and for those who have died.

What should I do if I can't go to Mass?

Catholics are encouraged to make a 'spiritual communion'. St. John Paul II writes that "it is good to *cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist*. This was the origin of the practice of 'spiritual communion', which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. Saint Teresa of Jesus wrote: 'When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you.'" (*Ecclesia Eucharistia*, no. 34) Resources to make your spiritual communion are included on this website.

How Do I Make a Spiritual Communion?

Below are recommendations for how to make a 'spiritual communion' when unable to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The recommendations can be adapted based upon personal and family needs.

- Gather with others in your household and begin a time of prayer with the sign of the cross.
- Take time to read and reflect upon the readings from Sunday Mass. You can find the readings at usccb.org and a Sunday Gospel reflection on our YouTube channel. Additionally, we have listed on this website links to Masses and religious websites
- Share prayer intentions quietly or aloud.
- Pray the Lord's Prayer.

- Pray one of the following prayers of spiritual communion (see below).

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, embolden me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within thy wounds hide me.
Never permit me to be parted from you.
From the evil Enemy defend me.
In the hour of my death call me.
and bid me come to thee,
that with your saints I may praise thee
for age upon age.
Amen.

Prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified

Behold, O good and loving Jesus, that I cast myself on my knees before you and, with the greatest fervor of spirit, I pray and beseech you to instill into my heart ardent sentiments of faith, hope and charity, with true repentance for my sins and a most firm purpose of amendment. With deep affection and sorrow I ponder intimately and contemplate in my mind your five wounds, having before my eyes what the prophet David had already put in your mouth about yourself, O good Jesus: They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones (Ps. 21: 17-18).

- Close with the sign of the cross.

The prayers listed here can be found in the Manual of Indulgences for those who make “an act of spiritual communion” and are prayers of thanksgiving in the Roman Missal. The Manual of Indulgences indicates that a partial indulgence is granted to the faithful who recite one of these prayers.

Pope Francis’s Prayer to Mary during Coronavirus Pandemic

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus’ pain, keeping your faith firm.

You, Salvation of Your People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Amen.

Please also consult MyParish App on your Smartphone for prayers and additional spiritual resources. Watch Bishop Malloy's Top of the Morning reflections on MyParish App or at www.rockforddiocese.org