

I write the following as a reminder that we who are not immune compromised or at risk due to advanced age are obliged to attend Sunday Mass each week. Our live stream Mass is offered for those who are unable or prevented from attending Sunday Mass. Some parishioners as first responders or members of the medical profession are often required to be on duty over the weekends, preventing them from participating in person. We encourage such persons to take advantage of our live stream Mass in order to remain connected to our Sunday celebration of the Eucharist.

Cardinal Seán's Letter dated June 9, 2021

Brothers and Sisters,

"Without the Lord's day, we cannot live!" His Holiness, Pope Benedict, in his homily at the Cathedral of Saint Stephen in Vienna on September 9, 2007, quoted the Abitinian Martyrs, who during the persecution of Emperor Diocletian were arrested for celebrating Sunday Mass. The martyrs responded to the magistrate: "Sine dominico non possumus!" – without the Lord's day, we cannot live! The Pope went on to say: "For these Christians, the Sunday Eucharist was not a commandment, but an inner necessity. Without him who sustains our lives, life itself is empty. To do without or to betray this focus would deprive life of its very foundation, would take away its inner dignity and beauty."

Aware that the opportunity to participate in Sunday Mass is increasingly available and increasingly safe for our Catholic people, we are joining dioceses in the Boston Province (Boston, Fall River, Springfield, Manchester, and Portland) in lifting the dispensation of the Sunday and Holy Day Mass obligation, effective the weekend of June 19 and 20, 2021.

We are mindful of the Lord's statement: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt 18:20). While we certainly can pray alone, there is both strength and blessedness in communal prayer.

We do also note that attendance at Mass is our way of following the Third Commandment of the Decalogue: "Remember the sabbath day – keep it holy. For six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy." (Ex. 20:8,11)

Cardinal Sean