



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIocese OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

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WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

Decree

The Holy Eucharist, as the “source and summit of the Christian life” (*Lumen Gentium* 11), is given to the faithful as the most efficacious spiritual nourishment that the Church can offer. For this reason, the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that every properly disposed Catholic “shall humbly receive [their] Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter Season” (2042) in order to illustrate fully the sublime relationship between the reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord and the Paschal feasts, which are “the origin and center of the Christian liturgy” (*ibid.*). Like all the Church’s precepts (cf. CCC 2041-2043), the reception of Holy Communion during the Easter Season is a law of the Church that imposes an obligation upon all the faithful, established to “guarantee to the faithful the indispensable minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth of God and neighbor” (CCC 2041).

Following the sudden suspension of public liturgies and the closure of parishes in response to the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, there was concern about the faithful’s ability to fulfill the obligations of some of the Church’s precepts. For that reason, the precept requiring attendance at Mass for all Sundays and holy days of obligations has been temporarily suspended, while the other precepts of the Church remain in force. As parishes in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston have now begun to resume the celebration of public liturgies, it is apparent that the fulfillment of the obligation to receive Holy Communion during the Easter Season, while not constituting an absolute impossibility, nonetheless poses a difficulty for many of the faithful in West Virginia, who continue to shelter in place or are at risk of infection due to age or existing health conditions.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has established that this precept may be fulfilled at any time during the Easter Season up to the first Sunday after Pentecost (the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity). However, with but days until this time period elapses, adequate provision for the fulfillment of this obligation must be made.

Therefore, as Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston, desiring that the faithful of this Diocese, while not putting themselves or others at risk, be enabled to avail themselves fully of the fountain of graces obtained through a “moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life” (2041), and wishing to encourage the diligent observance of all of the Church’s precepts among the Catholics of West Virginia, I hereby decree that for the Year of Grace 2020, those faithful of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston who are properly disposed, having been absolved of any grave sins in the Sacrament of Penance, may receive Holy Communion at any time between the Solemnity of the Lord’s Resurrection and the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, which occurs on November 22, 2020, in fulfillment of the above-stated precept.

Given at Wheeling on this, the third day of June, in the year of Our Lord two thousand twenty.

Mark E. Brennan

Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

Die 3 Mensis VI. 2020

Curia Vhelingensis Carolopolitanus

Chris R. Caruso

Cancellarius