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EMBARGOED until 10 a.m.

July 15, 2021

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Diocese Reinstating Obligation to Attend Mass

~ Catholics are called to return to in person worship starting August 15th ~

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Most Rev. Ronald W. Gainer, Bishop of Harrisburg, announced today that the obligation for Catholics to attend Mass in person on Sundays and Holy Days is being reinstated, effective August 15, 2021.

“Along with the other bishops of Pennsylvania, I give thanks to Almighty God for the progress our country has made in curbing the coronavirus pandemic. Each of us has felt the impact of COVID-19 in many ways as individuals and families, among friends and at work. This has been a time of hardship and struggle, of separation and isolation that has impacted our lives of faith as well. Our Lord Jesus has been near to us throughout this difficult period, especially when we encounter Him in the Holy Eucharist. There He offers us His healing and peace, His mercy and reconciliation. Now the time has come for everyone to return joyfully to the celebration of the Eucharist with thanksgiving and renewed faith,” said Bishop Gainer.

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass was put in place in March 2020 due to the developing COVID-19 pandemic. As the impact of the pandemic is greatly reduced, Bishop Gainer is restoring the obligation and calling all Catholics in the Diocese of Harrisburg to return to in person Mass.

While the obligation is being restored, as always, it does not apply to those who are seriously ill, who have a serious health risk, such as those receiving therapies that suppress immunity, as well as those who have serious anxiety because of large groups. Likewise, the obligation does not apply to those who care for loved ones who cannot attend Mass in person. Catholics who meet these criteria are urged to spend time in prayer, meditating on the Death and Resurrection of the Lord, reading the Sacred Scriptures and viewing a broadcast of the Mass.

“As your Bishop, I welcome this moment that reinstates the obligation for all Catholics in the Diocese of Harrisburg on August 15, 2021. For all of us, it is a moment to thank God anew for the great gift of the Holy Mass and the Real Presence of Jesus in His Holy Body and Blood as well as for the joy of gathering together as a believing community of faith,” added Bishop Gainer.

The Diocese of Harrisburg comprises 89 parishes across 15 counties in central Pennsylvania. To learn more about the Diocese, visit our website at www.hbgdiocese.org.

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