



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20017

Wednesday 24 June, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

My heart is filled with joy, a joy many of you now share at being able to once again join with your priests and pastors in the public celebration of the Mass. I know how much you have missed the Eucharist! Please know how much your parish priests and I have missed you, and how we have longed to celebrate Eucharist with you in person during these past months. We have missed your presence at Mass, your friendship, and all the ways you help brighten our parishes and neighborhoods. However, most of all, we have missed seeing our Lord Jesus feed you and strengthen you with His own Body and Blood during these times of difficulty.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit (John 15:5)." As Christians, we know it is essential for us to remain joined as branches to the vine of Jesus Christ, especially if we want to grow in holiness and charity. To thrive and bear good fruit, we must cling to the vine, the Lord. This is why being separated from the communal celebration of the Mass, the source and summit of our faith, has been so painful. So though joyful at our reopening for Mass in public, my heart still aches knowing this current pandemic requires many of you to remain home for your safety.

While the Archdiocese has instituted best practices and procedures for parishes to ensure that we can safely gather together, I realize some of you may decide to wait to join in person, especially those in a higher risk category due to age or pre-existing medical conditions, or those who care for vulnerable family members. For this reason, the dispensation for attending Sunday Mass will continue for all the Faithful. For those individuals, we continue to offer live streaming of the Mass. For more information on precautions at Mass, or to find a live-streamed Mass, please visit our archdiocesan website at www.adw.org, or contact your local parish.

During this time of social distancing, we have found new habits of prayer and action. I pray that as we return to public Masses, we continue to nurture our lives with the ways we have done in the past few months, incorporating our new habits of increased private prayer, time with our families, and acts of love and kindness toward our neighbors. Each of these new habits draws us closer to Jesus and prepares us to receive Him in the Eucharist. Like branches, we are nourished by the vine of Jesus Christ, truly present in the Eucharist, to help us bear fruit in our daily lives.

With all abundant joy, may God bless you, our whole family in Christ, our community, and our nation in these times and always.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

✠ Wilton D. Gregory
Archbishop of Washington