



**17 March 2023**

**ATTENDING MASS: SUNDAY AND HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION**

**- Lifting of Dispensation with effect from Palm Sunday 2023**

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Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:3)

Since the middle of March 2020, our freedom to physically attend Mass had been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Celebrating the Eucharist as a community in churches was no longer accessible for reasons beyond our control. Yet we found ways to listen to God's word at home and through the digital world. We united ourselves through personal and family prayers.

Due to the dangers to our health, in accordance with the Code of Canon Law (CIC) 87 §1 which allows the diocesan Bishop to dispense the faithful from disciplinary laws, we had granted a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

The dispensation was always meant to be a temporary exemption for the sake of the health, safety, and common good of all. After having consulted and discerned, seeing that most of the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, the general dispensation from Sunday and holy days of obligations will be lifted with effect from Palm Sunday 2023.

We remind ourselves once again, "the Lord's Day, on which the paschal mystery is celebrated, is by apostolic tradition to be observed in the universal Church as a primary holy day of obligation" (CIC 1246 §1).

As provided for in the Church's Canon Law, for those who are unable to fulfil the Sunday and holy days of obligation due to grave reasons which include serious medical conditions (for example, heart disease, chronic pulmonary diseases, kidney disease, being immuno-compromised, and other dangers to life that may be brought about by the coronavirus), you are still held to keep holy the Lord's day in other ways. You should "spend an appropriate time in prayer, whether personally or as a family" (CIC 1248 §2), which could include participating in an online mass.

**THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF MALAYSIA (CBCM)**

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We would like to welcome the faithful to return to full in-person Masses remembering that *“on Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.”* (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2180; CIC 1247.)

Your shepherds,



**+ Most Rev Julian Leow Beng Kim D.D.**

President, CBCM  
Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur

+ Rt Rev Sebastian Francis  
Bishop of Penang

+ Rt Rev Bernard Paul  
Bishop of Malacca Johore

+ Most Rev John Wong  
Archbishop of Kota Kinabalu

+ Rt Rev Cornelius Piong  
Bishop of Keningau

+ Rt Rev Julius Gitom  
Bishop of Sandakan

+ Most Rev Simon Poh  
Archbishop of Kuching

+ Rt Rev Richard Ng  
Bishop of Miri

+ Rt Rev Joseph Hii  
Bishop of Sibul