

The law of the Church must always be applied using good judgment. Thus, even after the dispensation is withdrawn and the obligation returns to its normative expression, individual Catholics and families must use their good judgment in those instances when to attend Mass, would place us or others in danger, or would cause us to neglect an obligation in Charity to someone at home.

The law does not bind us to the impossible. If the choice is between caring for a sick person at home or going to Mass, we should rightly choose to stay with the sick person. The Charity of Christ in the Mass itself requires that we not abandon the sick. Likewise, if we are sick, even with mild symptoms, and it is possibly the COVID virus, we should stay home so as not to endanger others.

It is likely that the COVID virus and its variants will continue to assail us. Here also we must use good judgment. If you think you are vulnerable to infection due to a compromised overall health condition, limiting your exposure to public gatherings is not unreasonable.

I continue to strongly urge Catholics to receive the available vaccines for their own safety and that of the wider community. I strongly encourage that we continue to use face coverings at Mass, and that we practice the safety protocols to which we have all become accustomed. These include frequent disinfecting of hands, and maintaining a reasonable distance between family groups.

In some ways, the withdrawal of the dispensation is a sign of a tentative return to a kind of normalcy. But, at the same time, the lessons of these many months must not be forgotten. To worship the Father in union with Christ at the Mass is an obligation in conscience. So too is our obligation to live not for ourselves but for Christ and for others. We move forward together keeping both obligations of love in mind.

May the prayers of the Blessed Virgin accompany us, and I place this Diocese under the special protection of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle.

In Christ the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel E. Flores".

Most Rev. Daniel E Flores, S.T.D.
Bishop of Brownsville