



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
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DECREE

After reading the publications of the most recent communication from the C.D.C. and from the Health Departments that serve the twenty-one counties that make up the Catholic Diocese of Memphis, I offer this new DECREE. This new DECREE becomes effective at the end of the school year for our Catholic schools. As you will see, most of the restrictions regarding public worship, seen at the beginning of this terrible pandemic (March of 2020), are no longer mentioned, no longer applicable. The GOLDEN RULE of the Risen Lord Jesus continues to be our guide in this and in every issue that we face as a Diocese (Leviticus 19. 18, 34; Matthew 7.12; Luke 6.31). I will remain attentive to news about this pandemic.

FIRST: While guarding our health and the health of our neighbor during this pandemic, we need to come back to the Sunday celebration of holy Mass. We need to come back and renew the strength of each parish community of faith. We need to hold sacred “the LORD’s DAY”.

As has been mentioned before, please note that “If participation in the Eucharistic celebration becomes impossible because of the absence of a sacred minister or another grave cause, it is strongly recommended that the faithful...devote themselves to prayer for suitable time alone, as a family... (canon 1248)”.

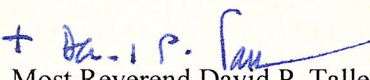
What is a grave cause that would make it impossible to meet the “Sunday obligation”? Granting the continued presence of this infectious new coronavirus among our people, *any health precondition that makes the person or parent or health provider more vulnerable to COVID 19...this kind of issue is the kind of grave cause mentioned in the canon above.*

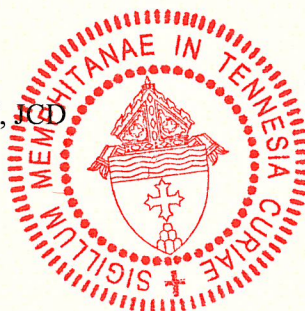
I continue to ask all Catholics and their families and friends to join your Pastor in the fellowship of our Catholic parishes, for Sunday Mass and for the ongoing formation of our lives, lived in Christ the Lord.

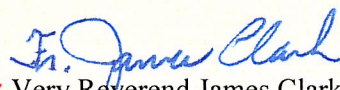
SECOND: Please follow the required instructions and restrictions listed below:

1. The withholding of the *cup of blessing* (chalices for Holy Communion) during holy Mass continues in effect *until further notice*.
2. Each Pastor is to determine how best to monitor “safe physical distancing”. Families living in the same household and those fully vaccinated should be encouraged to sit together.
3. Facial coverings (masks) are recommended but optional. Each Pastor should remain attentive to the health concerns of his parishioners.
4. All clergy and all that assist them in administering Holy Communion are encouraged to “purify hands” thoroughly before and after offering Holy Communion.

This Decree is given on the 14th of May 2021 and takes effect on the 28th of May 2021. I am yours, in the light and love of the Risen Lord,

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Most Reverend David P. Talley, MSW, JCD
Bishop of Memphis




Very Reverend James Clark, JV
Chancellor