



# Diocese of Armidale

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

## **RE: LIFTING OF THE DISPENSATION TO ATTEND SUNDAY MASS**

In April 2020, as a consequence of church closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a dispensation was given by me, to all the faithful in the Diocese of Armidale, from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass.

With the re-opening of our churches and the continued lifting of restrictions, to the point that the capacity of our parish churches now provide everyone an opportunity to attend Sunday Mass, I am lifting this dispensation effective from the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent which is the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2020.

With the pandemic still an ongoing issue there will still be some of the faithful for whom it may not be advisable or safe (either for themselves or others) to attend Sunday Mass: the elderly, who are 70 years and older; those who are sick and infirm; those who have underlying health issues, for example with compromised immune systems; those with chronic conditions that place them at risk from the corona virus; or those who are genuinely fearful of any health risks associated with socializing in large numbers. By the Universal law of the Church such people do not require a special dispensation. Prudence is the rule!

If you are unable to be present at a celebration of Sunday Mass, I encourage you to keep the Lord's day Holy in other ways such as time in personal or family prayer, reading and reflecting on the Scriptures, praying the Rosary, making a spiritual Communion, or following a Mass on-line.

Since the time of the Apostles, Christians have gathered together on a Sunday, which we call the "Lord's Day", to celebrate the Eucharist in which the Risen Christ returns to us, sustains us, strengthens us, and binds us together as one in union with Him in a bond of faith and love. Let us respond to the love of God by coming to meet Him with eager hearts in our celebration of Sunday Mass.

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy  
**Bishop of Armidale**  
8<sup>th</sup> December, 2020