

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH
4215 PINE RD. NE
BREMERTON, WA 98310

November 24, 2021

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

I greet you as we, the People of God and the community of the Church begin a new liturgical year and enter into the holy Season of Advent, a time of waiting, expectation, and hope. Our Scriptures celebrate the coming of Christ into human history over two thousand years ago, his coming into our present life and circumstances, and his future coming when God's plan for our eternal salvation reaches its fulfillment.

The past twenty months of the global coronavirus pandemic have been most challenging for all of us as we have sought ways of continuing to serve our community and to celebrate the Eucharist while doing our utmost to keep our parish family safe from illness and preserving the integrity and sacredness of the Mass through the sacrifices that we have made. We are blessed that there has not been any outbreak of the virus in our community. I am grateful for the guidance of our archdiocesan Coronavirus Taskforce that has helped to make this so for us and many other parishes.

Because of this reality, Archbishop Etienne has decided that it is time to reinstate the general obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation which has been dispensed over these many months of the pandemic. Beginning with the Fest of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th, Catholics of our archdiocese are once again obligated to keep holy the Lord's Day and all Holy Days by coming together to celebrate Mass with our faith community and to receive the body of Christ, our source of spiritual life and nourishment. As has always been the case, those who have a serious reason, and I want to emphasize, a serious reason, are exempt from attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. This includes those who are ill, those have significant health risk factors or conditions, or who care for someone who is immuno-compromised or ill, and those who have significant fear or anxiety of contracting the coronavirus while in a large group of persons.

As I reflect on the lifting of the dispensation, I recall the spiritual wisdom of the late Archbishop Alexander Brunett who noted that we should not look at our participation in

the Eucharist as an obligation, but rather as a privilege and an act of worship in which we give rightful praise and thanks to God for all the good that he has done for us and for the great gift of His Son who gives us his very own body and blood to feed every hunger and thirst of our human hearts. For in him we live, and move, and have our being. What better time than this Advent and Christmas Season to come home to the Lord, to renew our faith, to recommit ourselves to the reception of the Sacraments and to revitalize the relationships that we share with our sisters and brothers as we rebuild the community life of our faith family and grow in loving God and neighbor.

I invite you to view Archbishop Etienne's video welcoming all back to the celebration of the Eucharist. "[Welcome back to Mass](#)" Our parish priests, Fr. Dwight, Fr. Jack, Fr. Dave, and I look forward to seeing all of you this Advent Season and of celebrating with great joy the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord at Christmas. May we be lights for each other in this sacred season. Please be assured that we will continue to keep all safety measures in place, including the requirement that all parishioners continue to wear face masks, providing hand sanitizer, and maintaining a social distancing section in the church for those who need it. May God bless us all and keep us in his loving care and tender embrace.

*In Christ's Peace,
Verónica Kelley
Pastoral Coordinator*