

## Going to Sunday Mass



We have been through an extraordinary time with Covid and one of the hardest things was our being unable to come to Mass on a Sunday and being severely restricted at other services, even when saying goodbye to someone we love.

The Bishops of England and Wales decided early on to remove the Obligation to attend Sunday Mass so that no-one would feel that they were doing something wrong by missing Mass. Many people became used to watching Mass on televisions and computer screens – which has been a help but in the end it is not the same. Gathering with friends, family and members of the parish community supports and sustains us in our faith and helps others understand they are not alone. Receiving Jesus in Holy Communion is such a wonderful gift; there is nothing quite like it.

As we return to normal the Bishops want to emphasise the vital nature of coming together to celebrate Mass as part of our membership of the Church and so they have said that from Pentecost Sunday (5 June) those Catholics who are fit and able should return to Sunday Mass attendance. Reintroducing Sunday Obligation is not so much about telling people that they are sinners (we all are!) if they fail to come it is more to do with saying that we recognise our duty to God and to each other. Watching Mass at home is a great gift for those who are housebound or prevented by a serious reason from coming to Church, but we would be missing something in our understanding of belonging to the family of God if we imagined that we can participate from afar when there are no real reasons for staying away.

If our own family members never came to see us even though they are nearby we would be upset and feel let down. The tragedies of being unable to visit sick and dying relatives during the times of lockdown has made this very clear.

If you know of someone who is unable to come to Mass reassure them that the reintroduction of Sunday Mass Obligation does not apply to them. If you know of someone who could come along but chooses not to, tell them we miss them.