



Diocesan Centre
Coursington Road
Motherwell
ML1 1PP

Rt Rev. Joseph Toal STB KC*HS
Bishop of Motherwell

26th November 2021.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Along with my Brother Bishops in Scotland I have issued a pastoral letter this week to encourage the faithful in Motherwell Diocese to participate in the liturgical life and communal worship of the Church, most particularly through your willing presence at Sunday Mass. To this end, the Sunday Obligation to attend Holy Mass is to be re-instated at the beginning of 2022.

Some clergy and faithful have contacted me, or expressed their opinions elsewhere, to raise concerns about the decision to re-instate the Sunday Mass Obligation. They rightly tell me that some of the Faithful have a fear of coming to public gatherings, however meticulous the precautions put in place, and don't wish to feel pressured into returning to Sunday Mass before they are ready to do so. Earlier in the pandemic I wrote that the "tenderness" of individuals' consciences in another liturgical matter should be respected and I apply the same thinking here. If you are afraid to come back to Sunday Mass at present, take your time in deciding when to do so and do not feel it as a weight on your conscience if you are not fulfilling the obligation. By following your conscience in your own particular mitigating circumstances, it should not be considered a serious sin to make this decision. Indeed we are being told today that further problems may lie ahead with possible repercussions for us all.

With my prayers and good wishes as we are about to begin the Season of Advent,

Yours in Christ,

+ Joseph Toal