

# Saint Leo the Great Catholic Church

Very Reverend Justin L. Ward, S.T.L, Administrator

## May 9, 2021 The Sixth Sunday of Easter Year B

Mass Intentions		Lector Schedule	
<b>St. Leo Church</b>		8:00AM	10:00AM
Sunday May 2	8AM †Charlie Partridge 10AM <i>Pro Populo</i>	May 9	Casey Trusler Joe Veres
<b>St. Francis Church</b>		May 16	Casey Trusler Jan McDonald
1PM	Michelle Vetzal	May 23	Collins Hess Petra Miranda
		May 30	Volunteer Needed Denise Duke

### Saint Francis Mission Schedule

In light of Fr. Ward's schedule and responsibilities with Saint Leo and the Diocesan Office of Sacred Liturgy, the following schedule will be observed for Saint Francis Mission during the month of May.

May 9	1pm Holy Mass
May 16	No Mass
May 23	No Mass
May 30	1pm Holy Mass

When Holy Mass is not offered at St. Francis Mission, all parishioners are encouraged to attend the 8am and 10am Masses at Saint Leo Church in Demopolis. Services of Holy Communion will not be offered on this day.

### Pentecost Celebration

On the day of the Pentecost the Holy Spirit manifested Himself to the Apostles as of tongues of fire and filled them with Himself (Acts 2). This day is so significant that it is considered the birthday of the Church. Therefore, in honor of Pentecost Sunday and the Confirmation Candidates, there will be a parish wide celebration after the 10:00 AM Mass on the Feast of the Pentecost, May 23. At this event the parish will be celebrating with plenty of outdoor activities and food.

### VBS Volunteers Needed

Vacation Bible School preparations are now underway! If you are interested in leading children through the Scripture's adventures, then this is the summer activity for you! VBS will be held June 14-18, 5:00 - 6:45 PM. Volunteer orientation and set-up will be held the week before, however if your hours are limited please still consider signing-up. There are multiple stations that need volunteers, and if you are interested in helping in anyway, please pick-up a volunteer sign-up sheet at the back of the Church.

### Open House at the Lighthouse Women's Center

On Sunday, May 16 from 2:00-4:00, our local women's center will be hosting an open house to celebrate the grand opening of their new facility. Any who are able are encouraged to go and show their support. Tours of the new facility, information about their services, light refreshments, and door prizes will be offered.

Address: 549 U.S. Highway 80 W. Suite 2 (This is the new center right behind Domino's)

### Last Week's Offertory

5/2/21 St. Leo \$2,602.90

5/2/21 St. Francis No Mass

## DECREE CONFIRMING THE CESSATION OF THE DISPENSATION DUE TO COVID-19 AS OF MONDAY, MAY 24, 2021

On March 14, 2021, I extended the general dispensation from the obligation to assist at Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation for all Roman Catholics residing or visiting and present in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, through Sunday, May 23, 2021 (inclusive). Since that time, COVID-19 rates in our area have continued to fall steadily; moreover, a steadily increasing number of adults and adolescents have been vaccinated or have begun the vaccination process. Meanwhile, I have continually been encouraging all to assess the risks, adopt prudent mitigation measures, and find their way back to in-person worship in our parishes.

**Now therefore, beginning on Monday, May 24, 2021, which is the Memorial of Our Lady, Mother of the Church, all Roman Catholics residing or visiting and present in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama shall again be subject to the precept of assisting at Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, notwithstanding the ordinary reasons why one's obligation may be excused, which I will review below.**

It is firstly my duty and honor to thank you all for your faithfulness and concern during what has been an incredibly challenging time for all. The overwhelming majority came together in solidarity and made often drastic changes in your lives to keep each other safe and to ensure that the worship of God and the celebration of all the sacraments could continue.

I realize well that not everyone will welcome this news that the general dispensation is ending. But the challenge for all is to learn how to manage the risks reasonably and peacefully, and otherwise go forward with daily life. Although the infectious nature of COVID-19 is not to be taken lightly, at the same time, we have learned much about how the risk of being infected by it can be managed. And we have successfully applied those standards in our parishes, schools, and institutions.

For some, however, it is not so much fear as other real medical problems or serious health risks that lead them to the conclusion that it is not yet time to return to church. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, at paragraph 2181, teaches that "the Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin." In relation to COVID-19, a

"serious reason" could include:

- Being in a high risk category due to known, diagnosed co-morbidities;
- Being recently advised by a medical doctor that it is not yet safe in your specific circumstances to return to public activities;
- Experiencing a high amount of mental distress over the prospect of returning to public activities;
- Having symptoms of COVID-19 or of another serious/contagious illness.

I hereby authorize pastors and administrators to remove the pew ropes/separators in up to 75% of the church. It would be good, for the time being, to leave an area of socially-distanced seating for those who continue to have concerns. I leave it up to the discretion of pastors and administrators to determine when and how best to apply this permission in their locations.

We shall also continue to abstain from distributing the Precious Blood at Mass to the lay faithful. I remind everyone of our belief in the doctrine of concomitance: Jesus Christ is present, whole and entire, in each and every "part" of the Holy Eucharist; therefore, if we receive only the host, we still receive "the whole Christ" just as much as one who receives under both forms. Deacons may receive the host only. The priest-celebrant and any concelebrants must always receive under both species; this may be done by intinction in concelebrations, if more convenient. The physical exchange of peace shall continue to be omitted. The exchange of the sign of peace remains an optional part of the sacred liturgy, per the rubrics of the Roman Missal.

Priests, deacons, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs) who have received the COVID-19 vaccine and/or who have already had COVID-19 may discontinue wearing a facemask when distributing Holy Communion. Pastors and administrators will exercise their discretion in determining what use of hand sanitizer gel there might be at other times by the ministering clergy and EMHCs.

Finally, we should all continue to follow the guidance of legitimate national, regional, and local health authorities. I urge pastors and administrators to apply good common sense and to keep these indications in mind as they make policies for their locations. Do not hesitate to contact the Office of Sacred Liturgy for any guidance needed. In the meantime, I will continue to monitor our situation, and would foresee issuing a final directive sometime in the summer.

Given at the Diocesan Chancery in Birmingham on the 3rd of May, the Feast of Saints Philip and James, in the Year of the Lord 2021.

+ *Steven J. Raica*

Most Reverend Steven J. Raica  
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama