



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

Pentecost 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The words spoken at the Consecration of the Mass resonate deeply in our souls. *This is my Body which will be given up for you. This is the chalice of my Blood...which will be poured out for you.*

At every Mass, we bear witness to Christ's sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Through the gift of the Eucharist, which the Lord instituted at the Last Supper, we receive His pure and boundless love over and over again. As Catholics, we believe that the Eucharist *is* the Body and Blood of Christ. Such a precious gift deserves our reflection and appreciation. It's not something we can experience virtually. Christ's presence in the Eucharist is real and our personal presence is required to receive it.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many changes to our lives, to our routines, and even to our Sunday worship. For a period of time we were not able to be personally present for the celebration of Sunday Mass at all. For the last several months, many have been a part of Sunday Mass through live streaming. Now, as the pandemic wanes and restrictions are lifting, I invite all the faithful of the Archdiocese to make their way back to the in person celebration of the Mass. As helpful as livestreaming was during the difficult months of the pandemic, when it comes to the Mass, *nothing compares to being there.*

Today, on this Pentecost Sunday, I am pleased to announce an Archdiocesan initiative based on this truth and called *Nothing Compares to Being There*. It will involve the entire Archdiocese and feature an invitation for everyone to recognize more profoundly the irreplaceable need to be in person for the celebration of Sunday Mass. During the summer months, pastors and parish leaders will be preparing a heartfelt invitation to their communities and together we will issue this invitation in September 2021. While the fullness of this invitation happens in September, even now I encourage you, "Nothing compares to *being there.*" Come home to the in person celebration of Mass.

On this glorious feast of Pentecost, may God pour out His Spirit upon us and enkindle in us a renewed desire to be present at the Eucharistic Feast.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.
Archbishop of Philadelphia