



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

May 28, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In just a few days, we will celebrate the great Solemnity of Pentecost, the close of Easter Time. In reality, Pentecost is more about an opening—the opening of every member of the Church to a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our midst. On the first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gave birth to the real presence of the Risen Lord in his Word, in the Sacraments, and in the mission of every Christian. Pentecost this year promises the same for us here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. As we begin to move carefully out of the isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and once again safely assemble as the Church with our Risen Lord, we are called to be open to the same Holy Spirit who resides in the hearts of all who believe.

I am hopeful as we gradually return to our Catholic way of life, that we can do so as a stronger and more vibrant Catholic community. The first step is for me personally to tell you it is ***Time to Come Home***. It echoes a call and invitation I made to all in the Philadelphia region on the day of my Installation as your new Archbishop. ***Come Home*** to listen to the Lord's saving Word. ***Come Home*** to be with him at the altar for his redeeming Sacrifice. ***Come Home*** to see him in all who cross your paths. For some of you this coming home is as simple as taking your seat in your parish church. For others, who have been occasional in the practice of the faith, this coming home is a new commitment to be more faithful in following the Lord. For some others, who have become reacquainted with the Church through virtual worship during the pandemic, this coming home may be a larger step and we are ready to welcome you. It is time for all to ***Come Home***, renewed by the Holy Spirit!

I am very grateful to all of our priests who served so consistently during the weeks of the pandemic to shepherd their parishioners during such an unprecedented time in our lives. I am thankful to all of the faithful who held fast to living their faith in creative ways, especially without the possibility of participating in Mass. As we open our churches for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and the Sacraments during the first weekend of June, I am filled with great joy and hope to see you, gathered once again around the altar. The Holy Spirit wants to breathe new life into all of us, his community of missionary disciples. Let us respond together with a deeper faith and a joyful heart. Let us respond with a willingness to express this faith in our lives and to share it with those the Lord has placed around us. Be assured of my prayers for you as I rely on your prayers for me.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nelson J. Pérez".

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

The faithful of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation until further notice. The faithful also are dispensed this year from their Easter Duty, that is, to receive Holy Communion during Easter Time in the state of grace.

For additional information and resources to assist with the reintegration into parish life, please see *Arise: Restoring Catholic Life after the Pandemic* at <http://archphila.org/arise/>.