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**STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP NELSON J. PÉREZ
REGARDING SAFETY AS MASS OBLIGATION RESUMES**

“Ensuring the health and welfare of those entrusted to the pastoral and temporal care of our Church, especially as we navigate a global pandemic, is a paramount priority as the Archbishop of Philadelphia. During this time of acute hardship and struggle, I have worked in conjunction with the Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania and the senior administration of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to implement best practices intended to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and protect those most vulnerable.

As the COVID-19 landscape evolved, we continuously re-evaluated those efforts in consultation with public health officials and based on data. .

As your Shepherd, I am called to provide the Eucharist in a safe environment. To that end, I ask that you prioritize your own health and the health of your neighbors and faith communities.

As previously announced, the Catholic Bishops of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are reinstating the obligation to attend Mass in person on Sundays and holy days beginning on Sunday, August 15, 2021. However, by longstanding Church law, this obligation does not apply to those who are

- sick;
- have a serious health risk;
- live in a household with those at risk;
- serve as primary caregivers to those at risk;
- have serious anxiety or concerns about being in a large-group setting due to COVID-19;
or
- are unable to attend Mass in person

As an act of charity, all who are able should become fully vaccinated. Anyone who believes they might have COVID-19 or one of its variants should seek testing and take every precaution for the preservation of public health. As a people of hope, let us pray for an end to this health crisis. ”

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez
Archbishop of Philadelphia