

## Is missing Mass on Sunday a mortal sin?

We need to start by looking at what makes a sin mortal. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: ‘Mortal sin is sin whose *object is grave matter* and which is also *committed with full knowledge* and *deliberate consent*.’”(CCC #1857)

With this in mind, we look at Canon Law which states: “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass.” (Can. 1247) The Catechism references this Canon and states: “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.” (CCC #2181)

From the Catechism we learn that missing Sunday Mass is gravely sinful matter. However, I cannot judge whether a particular person, who misses Mass on a particular Sunday, commits a mortal sin or not. This is because I do not know the person’s level of knowledge and whether their situation allows them the freedom to act with deliberate consent. It can probably be assumed that most Catholics know that it is an obligation to attend Mass every Sunday. Parents make sure you teach your children!

And if you know it is your obligation to attend Mass, then you must ask yourself whether playing golf, sleeping in for an extra hour or two, or avoiding some minor inconvenience is a serious enough reason to break that obligation. Ultimately, you must be confident that you can justify your reasons to God.

**Deacon Joe**