



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE  
OF MELBOURNE

## #21 UPDATE: GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

### COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Information Updated: Tuesday 10 November 12.00pm

The following Guidelines are approved by Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne, to assist Clergy and Faithful with questions pertaining to specific areas of liturgy and ministry in the Archdiocese of Melbourne during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the **latest directives announced by Government as part of its Roadmap for the reopening of the State of Victoria**, the following will become operational **from 11:59pm on 8 November, 2020.**

**Information is now to be understood as Statewide.**

**The restrictions in place are compulsory. The Chief Health Officer of Victoria has issued a lawful direction as part of the current State of Emergency.**

**Face coverings/masks must be worn indoors and outdoors for everyone over 12 years of age, unless there is a medical exemption.**

**Under no circumstances should anyone awaiting a COVID-19 test verification, including Clergy (even without presenting symptoms) attend a church or parish setting until a diagnosis is confirmed. Additionally, under no circumstances should anyone attend who is closely connected to people who are awaiting test results or who have tested positive.**

## VICTORIA

### THIRD STEP as of 11.59pm Sunday 8 November 2020

<b>Curfew</b>	No curfew in place.
<b>Leave Home</b>	No restrictions on reasons to leave home or distance you can travel intrastate, but stay safe.
<b>Places of Worship and Religious Gatherings</b>	All places of worship including churches, adoration chapels and other church buildings used for public prayer and religious services may open for permitted religious ceremonies.  <b>Indoors: Allowed for up to a cap of 20 people plus one faith leader. Infants under 12 months of age are not included in the cap. Physical arrangements should accommodate 2 groups of ten, with at least 5 metres between each group (consider 10 at front</b>

	<p>LHS and 10 at back RHS for example), subject to requirements including a COVIDSafe plan and the density quotient.</p> <p>Indoor religious gatherings have a maximum service length of 90 minutes, with a recommendation for 30 minutes in between services to ensure that groups do not congregate in front of and around places of worship</p> <p><b>Outdoors:</b> Allowed for up to <b>50 people, plus one faith leader.</b> Infants under 12 months of age are not included in the cap. Ceremonial participants are otherwise included in cap, held proximate to a place of worship.</p> <p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A venue can only have one religious gathering at a time, whether indoor or outdoor, and ceremonial participants other than faith leaders are included in the capacity limits.</li> <li>• Under current DHHS Guidelines, indoor congregational singing is not permitted, only cantor/choral or small group singing. Small choirs or singers should only perform in well ventilated indoor settings and must be limited to a maximum of 5 singers or wind instrument players. Performers must be 2 metres apart and 5 metres from the congregation or celebrating Clergy. The DHHS have noted that singing outdoors is strongly recommended.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Private Worship</b></p>	<p>Places of worship can open for private worship <b>for a household and up to two other people, plus a faith leader.</b></p>
<p><b>Weddings</b></p>	<p>A wedding <b>indoors or outdoors</b> at a place of worship can have the couple, celebrant and a photographer, then ten others (witnesses are included in the 10 guests) - making <b>a total of 14 people</b> allowed. Infants under 12 months of age are not included in this cap. If a wedding is held at a private residence, private gathering restrictions apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONTACT DETAILS are required for all attendees– and must include: First Name + Contact Number + date and time at which the person attended the place of worship;</li> <li>• Physical distancing and capacity limits must be maintained at all times;</li> <li>• Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout;</li> <li>• The couple getting married do not need to wear a face mask during the process of getting married. Photos taken during the ceremony can be mask free. When taking photos, the couple and the photographer should stay 1.5m away from others.</li> <li>• Doors must remain closed to prevent public access;</li> <li>• No lingering outside the church following the wedding;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following a wedding, the church must be cleaned in accordance with the guidance on routine environmental cleaning and disinfection in the community, available at: <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community">https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community</a></li> </ul>
<b>Funerals</b>	<p><b>Indoors:</b> permitted with up to <b>20 people</b>. Infants under 12 months of age and people required to conduct the funeral not included in the cap.</p> <p><b>Outdoors:</b> permitted with up to <b>50 people</b>. Infants under 12 months of age and people required to conduct the funeral not included in the cap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CONTACT DETAILS are required for all attendees– and must include: First Name + Contact Number + date and time at which the person attended the place of worship;</li> <li>Physical distancing and building capacity limits must be maintained at all times;</li> <li>Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout;</li> <li>Doors must remain closed to prevent public access;</li> <li>No lingering outside the church following the funeral;</li> <li>Following a funeral, the church must be cleaned in accordance with the guidance on routine environmental cleaning and disinfection in the community, available at: <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community">https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community</a></li> <li>It is not possible to have any refreshments in the Parish hall or centre after the funeral is concluded.</li> <li>Permission is granted to hold the funeral Liturgy in a funeral parlour, if the family so wish.</li> </ul> <p>Families may wish to arrange a larger Memorial Mass at a later date, and after the public emergency and relevant social restrictions have passed.</p>
<b>Baptisms</b>	<p>May be celebrated under the latest outdoor and indoor religious gathering limits, Note specific hygiene around use of oils and water. All hygiene and distancing precautions must be met, and the recording of names and contact details of all present must be maintained. It is advised that if families are taking photos or videos – they should be reminded before the celebration that distancing and the wearing of masks should be maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In emergency situations priests and deacons must make themselves available for Baptism. In extreme circumstances any lay person can validly baptise using water and the Trinitarian formula. (Can 861 §2);</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONTACT DETAILS are required for all attendees– and must include: First Name + Contact Number + date and time at which the person attended the place of worship;</li> <li>• Baptism by immersion or baptisms using already blessed water are to be avoided. Fresh water is to be used in every individual instance of baptism, and immediately drained afterwards.</li> <li>• Social distancing of all attendees; all (excluding baby) wear masks throughout.</li> <li>• Fresh water is blessed and used for each baptism.</li> <li>• The child to be baptised is held by the parents throughout.</li> <li>• The welcoming blessing of the child is done by the priest without physical contact with the child.</li> <li>• The two anointings are done using single-use cotton buds.</li> <li>• The water is poured by the priest above the head of the child.</li> <li>• The dressing of the child in a white garment is done by the parents.</li> <li>• The lighting of the candle is done by the person holding the candle.</li> <li>• Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout;</li> <li>• If celebrated indoors, doors must remain closed to prevent public access;</li> <li>• Following a Baptism indoors, the church must be cleaned in accordance with the guidance on routine environmental cleaning and disinfection in the community, available at: <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community">https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community</a></li> </ul>
<b>Penance</b>	<p>Only the First Rite of Penance (individual confession and absolution) can be celebrated, because of the restrictions on numbers. All hygiene and distancing measures must be met.</p> <p>If there arises an urgent need to impart sacramental absolution to several people together out of grave necessity (eg. to a group of persons in a hospital setting who are dying from Coronavirus), then permission is to be sought from the Regional Vicar. The provisions of Can.961 and 962 are to be met and applied for validity.</p>
<b>Confirmations</b>	<p>In accordance with the Archbishop’s Decree of 10 November 2020 granting the faculty to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to Parish Priests and Administrators of Parishes within the Archdiocese of Melbourne during this time of emergency, Confirmation celebrations may now take place in accordance with that Decree and the following guidelines for communal parish or school celebration of the Sacrament. Delegation for the confirmation of single individuals is still to be requested from the Office of the Vicar General.</p> <p><b>A. Preparing for the Celebration:</b></p>

- In dialogue with families, catechists and school leadership, Parish Priests are delegated to determine locally whether Confirmation will be conferred within Mass or without Mass.
- Locations for consideration include: inside the parish church (according to permitted numbers); outside the parish church (provided due reverence can be observed); or in a suitably prepared and decorated school hall according to the permitted single-class numbers (parents would not be permitted).
- Each local community can determine the days and times most suitable for their celebrations. The Office of the Vicar General is to be kept informed of the schedule.
- Keep in mind the current guides around numbers, density and hygiene precautions to determine the numbers of people allowed to be present in a church.
- In parishes with large numbers of candidates, a parish priest may enlist another parish priest from a neighbouring parish to assist with some sessions.
- When possible, pastors should provide live-streaming services of the celebration of the Order of Confirmation. This will offer the Confirmandi and families happy memories about this important celebration.

**B. The Celebration**

- The Sacrament is to be celebrated using the approved Rite of Confirmation (within Mass or Outside of Mass)
- Conduct all standard protocols for preparing and sanitising the liturgical space before and after the celebration.
- The Priest is to follow the health and safety guidelines enumerated in the Archdiocesan guidelines for the celebration of the Mass.
- Prior to the start of the liturgy, a small table should be placed appropriately that would hold the Sacred Chrism, a purificator, sufficient cotton swabs (1 for each candidate), and an empty container (with a lid) to act as a receptacle for the disposal of the swabs.
- The Priest, the candidate for Confirmation (if over the age of 12), and the proxy sponsor are to wear a facial mask throughout the sacramental action.

**C. Gestures during Confirmation**

*The Laying on of Hands:*

This is to take place by a gesture of extending your hands over and above the heads of the group of candidates to be confirmed, as the Prayer of Confirmation is said. There is to be no physical contact with anyone to be confirmed.

*Anointing with Chrism:*

- The Sacred Chrism to be used during the Sacrament should be poured into a separate vessel than the one in which the Chrism is kept. The vessel must be sanitised properly before use.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Priest is to sanitise his hands prior to the anointing with Chrism.</li> <li>- A single-use cotton swab, dipped into the Chrism, must be used to anoint. There is to be no physical contact with the one being anointed. The tip of the cotton swab is used to anoint on the forehead. The cotton bud is to be immediately disposed of after each single use in the container provided. A new cotton bud is to be used for each person to be anointed.</li> <li>- The Priest should use sanitiser as often as needed.</li> <li>- Any leftover Chrism in the vessel should be disposed of in the liturgically proper manner. It should not be returned to the container in which the Chrism is usually stored.</li> <li>- If needed, more Chrism can be obtained from the Cathedral in the usual way.</li> </ul> <p><i>Gesture of Peace:</i> The gesture of peace (eg. hand shake, the touching of the cheek), no longer envisaged in the current Ritual, is to be dispensed with entirely. The gesture is not to take place. The words of the exchange of peace, however, are still to be said.</p> <p><i>Other Actions:</i> All other gestures or symbolic actions involving physical contact or sharing are not permitted (e.g. lighting of candles; presenting of symbols for confirmation; issuing of certificates; etc).</p> <p><i>Sponsor:</i> There is to be one proxy sponsor to stand in the place of the sponsors for all the candidates to be confirmed in a single Liturgy. The sponsor is to remain near to the one to be confirmed, but no physical contact is to be made. The sponsor is not to place their hand upon the shoulder of the one to be confirmed.</p> <p><i>Other Considerations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If pictures are requested by the Confirmandi for their families, it should be taken only with the candidate and the proxy sponsor in a planned and orderly manner so as to observe physical distancing at all times. Group pictures should not be taken.</li> <li>- Gatherings before and after the celebration of Confirmation are not to take place.</li> <li>- When recording in the Register the name of the priest who has confirmed, note is to be made of the delegation granted by the Archbishop ('Delegation received from Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne, on 10 November 2020'). The same applies in notifying the Parish of Baptism of the one confirmed.</li> </ul>
<b>Livestreaming</b>	Follows the indoor limits of <b>20 people plus a faith leader</b> . Technicians must be included in the cap of 20.
<b>Public Gatherings in Public Spaces</b>	Permitted up to <b>10 people</b> across multiple households, friends and/or family, outdoors. Infants under 12 months not included in the

	cap. <b>A public place means an area that everyone can access, for example a local park or the beach.</b>
<b>Home Visits</b>	<p>Each day, a household can receive <b>up to two different adult visitors per day</b>, either together or separately. Infants under 12 months are not included in this cap, and other dependents can also attend if they cannot be left unattended or cared for in another setting. The two people may be from different households.</p> <p>Religious gatherings and prayer groups held at a private residence are subject to the private gathering limit. This means the household itself plus up to two visitors and their dependents.</p> <p>Faith leaders may visit someone in their home on request to share spiritual ministry (or equivalent religious services) to provide care and support to a person. It is critical that measures like face coverings and physical distancing are observed.</p>
<b>Hospitals or Care Facilities</b>	<p>Patients are allowed one household to visit a patient in hospital or a care facility once per day for 2-hours</p> <p>Faith leaders may visit someone in a hospital or care facility to share spiritual ministry (or equivalent religious services) to those who are at the end of their life, or if it would support a patient or resident with their emotional or mental wellbeing, in line with other visiting restrictions and if this support cannot be provided remotely. It is important to note that strict limits on visitors apply in these circumstances. It is critical measures like face coverings and physical distancing are observed and these visits are limited to what is reasonably and necessary (e.g. a visit has been requested by a patient).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Priests and Deacons visiting care facilities must comply with all hygiene precautions and the protocols of the relevant hospitals or aged-care facilities (washing hands, etc.) as appropriate.</li> <li>● As previously communicated, when Anointing the Sick, permission is given to lay on hands by holding them above, rather than upon the head, so as to avoid physical contact. The anointing is to be carried out by dipping a cotton wool ball, cotton bud into the bottle of Oil (do not use an Oil Stock).</li> <li>● Protective gloves could also be used, which can be disposed of appropriately after a single use. Anointing the head would be sufficient.</li> <li>● If Holy Communion is given, follow the guidelines below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- instructions from the health or care facility regarding sanitising and PPE; Wash hands or use a hand sanitiser once you enter a home (if applicable) must be met;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avoid any physical contact with the person or family during the visit;</li> <li>- Use a hand sanitiser again before distributing Communion;</li> <li>- If the communicant usually receives Communion on the tongue, strongly encourage him or her, for your safety as well as his / hers, to receive Communion in the hand;</li> <li>- Wash or sanitise your hands after the visit;</li> <li>- Maintain optimum physical distance with everyone in the room, except the patient;</li> <li>- Do not offer comfort through any physical contact.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is encouraged that those Clergy who are in a vulnerable age category or with health concerns contact a neighbouring Priest, or their Regional Vicar to discuss who might be available to support them.</li> </ul> <p>Physical distancing to the extent possible, disinfecting hands before and after pastoral encounters, and other current measures must be applied at all times.</p>
<b>Ministering to COVID-19 Patients</b>	Health officials will be able to guide what is possible and permissible.
<b>Work</b>	Continue to work from home

## GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

These Liturgical Guidelines are intended to assist Clergy and faithful in the reverent and joyful celebration of Holy Mass while maintaining the health and safety precautions offered through health and government authorities. It is by carefully observing the directives and precautions outlined in this document that the celebration of Mass, even with the limitations of restrictions in place can take place prudently. We look forward to gathering together with all our people to safely celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice, but in the meantime we will follow these guidelines with diligence, using common sense and respect for others.

### **FACEMASKS and SANITISING**

#### **Outdoor and Indoor Masses, Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms, and Live-Streaming.**

- For Clergy: Masks should be worn as you enter for Mass. They may be removed during the celebration of Mass, but are to be placed back on for the distribution of Holy Communion and at the conclusion of Mass as you process out.
- All present in the worship space –including musicians, technicians for live streaming, and cleaners and musicians, **MUST** wear masks at all times as per the DHHS Guidelines.
- Sanitiser must be used regularly throughout the Liturgy and celebrants must visibly sanitise before and after the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Masks must be available. If anyone does not have one, or there is not one available,



they cannot participate or enter the church. A person with a medical exemption must provide their exemption for recording.

- **SINGING:** Particular attention should be given to singing during the celebration of Mass or other liturgies. **Under current DHHS Guidelines, indoor congregational singing is not permitted, only cantor/choral or small group singing. Small choirs or singers should only perform in well ventilated indoor settings and must be limited to a maximum of 5 singers or wind instrument players. Performers must be 2 metres apart and 5 metres from the congregation or celebrating Clergy. The DHHS have noted that singing outdoors is strongly recommended.**
  - When a cantor is singing, the mask may be lowered, but must be worn at all other times.
  - A Cantor should be spaced away from other participants (like the celebrating priest), and not directly above worshippers.
  - A singer must use a different microphone to readers and homilist.
  - Ensure microphones are sanitised before and after use.
  - These guides are advised for the celebration of weddings, funerals and other liturgical celebrations.

### **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

- The reader may lower his/her mask for the readings. This applies as well for the Universal Prayer.

### **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

- The hosts to be consecrated for the faithful should be placed on a separate Paten (or Ciborium) to the Paten holding the host that the priest will consume.

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

*The following information is designed to allow for the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass in a safe manner for both ministers and communicants. All liturgical norms that govern the ordinary distribution of Holy Communion are observed in these norms, preserving the integrity of the celebration and distribution of the Eucharist.*

With the movement for Victoria into the Third Step of the Roadmap, we are now able to gather in limited numbers and to again receive Holy Communion. Receiving Our Lord in this way is a moment of great significance and of personal intimacy with Jesus, and the Church wants to ensure it is done with dignity and respect. As Cardinal Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments recently wrote:

*Aware that God never abandons the humanity He has created, and that even the hardest trials can bear fruits of grace, we have accepted our distance from the Lord's altar as a time of Eucharistic fasting, useful for us to rediscover its vital importance, beauty and immeasurable preciousness. As soon as is possible, however, we must return to the Eucharist with a purified heart, with a renewed amazement, with an increased desire to meet the Lord, to be with him, to receive him and to bring him to our brothers and sisters with the witness of a life full of faith, love, and hope. (Let us return to the Eucharist with joy! Letter on the celebration of the liturgy during and after the COVID 19 pandemic. (+Robert Cardinal Sarah, September 2020)*

Cardinal Sarah also envisaged the need to put in place measures appropriate for this time:

*In times of difficulty (e.g. wars, pandemics), Bishops and Episcopal Conferences can give provisional norms which must be obeyed. Obedience safeguards the treasure entrusted to the Church.*

In light of this, and as a provisional measure for the time-being only, the Archbishop asks that Communion be distributed in the hand only (and not directly on the tongue), as a precautionary step to protect against COVID-19. This is not done lightly, because in normal circumstances the Church in Australia does not limit reception of the Sacrament to one way or another. **This is not a permanent situation, and will be reviewed at each significant change in the Victorian Roadmap. The Archbishop will lift this requirement at the earliest opportunity.** Catholics who do not feel able to receive the Sacrament in this way due to personal devotion or piety are to be respectfully encouraged to make a spiritual communion. You are reminded that in the case of serious sickness or end of life the Sacrament is available without restriction. In particular cases in which a communicant has some difficulty managing the mask and receiving Communion in the hand, please show pastoral care and utmost regard for them.

- All worshippers are to wear a face covering or mask throughout the celebration of Mass and the other Sacraments.
- Instructions on receiving Holy Communion should be given to communicants at the time of the Fraction Rite.
- The following is recommended:

**The Priest or (minister):**

- Sanitises hands before beginning distribution
- Wears a mask throughout distribution
- Each communicant comes forward to a place approximately 1.5 metres away
- Exchanges the dialogue, while both wearing their masks
- Places the host slightly above the outstretched and flat hands of the communicant
- Waits until the communicant has moved away before calling forth the next person
- Sanities hands after completing distribution

**The Communicant:**

- Required distancing between communicants is maintained in the queue.
- Wears a mask.
- Sanitises hands at a dispensing station before coming to receive Communion.
- Engages in the dialogue and receives the host in the hand, while wearing the mask.
- Steps several metres to the side, and away from the priest.
- Removes one side of the mask to place the Host in their mouth with the other hand.
- Re-positions the mask.
- Returns to their seat via a different pathway.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is advised that when live-streaming, reception of Holy Communion is done off-screen/video.