



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#17 UPDATE: GENERAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Information Updated: Monday 28 September 5.00pm

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 the proposed Roadmaps for the reopening of the Metropolitan and Regional areas of Victoria**, the following will become operational **for Metropolitan Melbourne only, from 11:59pm on 27 September, 2020.**

METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE **STEP TWO Summary**

- **Curfew:** no longer in place.
- **Public Gatherings:** up to 5 people outdoors (from 2 families).
- **Religious Gatherings:** Can also take place outdoors with five people plus a faith leader. Must be adjacent to the place of worship with only one group permitted at a time. You can only travel up to 5km from your home to attend a gathering and only for 2 hours.
- **Weddings:** Permitted in outdoor public spaces allowed with up to 5 people (the couple and the two witnesses). The faith leader and children under 12 months not included.
- **Funerals:** allowed with up to 10 mourners (infants under 12 months of age or people required to conduct the funeral not included in the limit). A separate grouping of mourners may not come in to remove the coffin from the church.
- **End of Life and Care:** Faith Leaders may attend a dying resident or provide end of life support to a resident in their home or in a Health or Care facility at the request of the patient. Visits may also be made to support a patient or resident with their emotional or mental wellbeing if it cannot be done remotely. Such care must be undertaken in co-operation with the particular facility and in line with other visiting restrictions and facility guidelines.
- **Visitors to the Home:** If living alone or a single parent, one visitor may be nominated to create a 'social bubble.'
- **Work:** Continue to work from home.
- **REVIEW:** [DHHS Victorian Roadmap for Metropolitan Melbourne](#)

Under no circumstances should anyone awaiting 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.

STEP TWO – Metropolitan Melbourne

All Victorians over the age of 12 must wear a face covering whenever they leave their home, unless a medical exemption applies.

As of 11.59pm Sunday 27 September 2020 and until otherwise directed:

- All places of worship including churches, adoration chapels and other church buildings used for public prayer and religious services are to remain closed except for permitted ceremonies.
- **RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS:** permitted with a limit of five people, plus one faith leader. Must be adjacent to the place of worship with only one group permitted at a time. You can only travel up to 5km from your home to attend a gathering and only for 2 hours. Signage, directions and sanitising stations must be clearly available. Contact Records must be kept
- **WEDDINGS:** permitted in outdoor public spaces with a maximum of 5 attendees, including the couple and two witnesses, but not including the celebrant. Children under 12 months are also exempted from the number. Weddings do not need to occur proximate to a place of worship.
- **FUNERALS:** will be limited to 10 mourners (**infants under 12 months of age not included in this number**). A separate grouping of mourners may not come in to remove the coffin from the church. You can travel to a funeral outside of metropolitan Melbourne. Restrictions apply based on the location of the funeral, and limits to numbers also apply.
- **BAPTISMS:** may be celebrated under the outdoor gathering limits. Note specific hygiene around use of oils and water (refer further in these Guidelines). This allows for 5 people including the faith leader outdoors (a child under 12 months not included), meeting all hygiene and distancing precautions and recording names and contact details of all present.
- **LIVESTREAMING:** a limit of 5 in total may be present, including the celebrant.
- **VISITATIONS:**
Homes: Under Stage 4 restrictions, 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 who is at the end of their life. It is critical measures like face coverings and physical distancing are observed, and that the travel to the person's home and the visit are limited to what is reasonably required and necessary (e.g. only required attendees should visit and just for the service).

Hospitals or Care Facilities:

Under Stage 4 restrictions, 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 required and necessary (e.g. a visit has been requested by a patient). Such services can also be provided using video or live streaming, depending on religious tradition.

- **If you can work from home, you must do so.**

All requirements around hygiene and distancing must be met, along with the collection of contact details.

STEP THREE – Regional Victoria (inc. Mitchell Shire)

All Victorians over the age of 12 must wear a face covering whenever they leave their home, unless a medical exemption applies.

As of 11.59pm Wednesday 16 September, 2020 until otherwise directed:

- **PLACES of WORSHIP:** Places of worship can open for private worship for households and people who are in a bubble together (up to five people).
- **OUTDOOR RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS:** of up to **10 people, plus 1 (one) faith leader**, proximate to a place of worship, are allowed. Signage, directions and sanitising stations must be clearly available. Contact Records must be kept.
- **WEDDINGS:** will be limited to **10 people**, including the couple and the two witnesses. The celebrant and children under 12 months of age are not included in this number.
- **FUNERALS:** will be limited to **20 mourners** plus the minimum number required to conduct the funeral. Children who are under one year of age are not counted in the 20 person limit. You can travel to attend a funeral.
- **BAPTISMS:** may be celebrated under the outdoor gathering limits, or worship for households or 'social bubble' direction. Note specific hygiene around use of oils and water. This allows for eleven people including the celebrant outdoors and five people including the celebrant indoors (a child under 12 months not included), meeting all hygiene and distancing precautions and recording names and contact details of all present.
- **LIVESTREAMING:** a limit 5 in total may be present, including the celebrant.
- **VISITATIONS:**
Homes: 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 who is at the end of their life. It is critical measures like face coverings and physical distancing are observed, and that the travel to the person's home and the visit are limited to what is reasonably required and necessary (e.g. only required attendees should visit and just for the service).

Hospitals or Care Facilities:

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). Such services can also be provided using video or live streaming, depending on religious tradition.

- **If you can work from home, you should continue to do so.**

All requirements around hygiene and distancing must be met, along with the collection of contact details.

GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES – Face coverings:

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 now 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.

If there are difficulties maintaining any of the following directives, then Masses should be suspended.

FACEMASKS and SANITISING

Outdoor 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.
- All hygiene and distancing regulations must continue to be met as per the general guidelines below

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- The reader may lower his/her mask for the readings. This applies as well for the Universal Prayer.
- This same direction is extended for a cantor (or singers where further number permit): when the cantor is singing, the mask may be lowered. It must be worn at all other times.

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 Metropolitan Melbourne to Step Two, and with the Third Step in place still for Regional Victoria, 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.

| | |
|---|--|
| Priests Daily Mass and obligations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Mass should be offered for all God’s people, the faithful in Melbourne, and the wider community. |
| Places of Worship and Gatherings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metropolitan Melbourne: Places of religion and worship remain closed for both religious ceremonies and private worship, except for funerals and the live streaming of Mass. Livestreaming is limited to up to five people including the faith leader. • Regional Victoria: Outdoor religious gatherings for up to 10 people plus a faith leader are allowed. Places of worship can open for private worship for households and people who are in a bubble together (up to five people). |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| <p>Baptisms</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Metropolitan Melbourne: may be celebrated under the outdoor gathering limits. Note specific hygiene around use of oils and water. This allows for 5 people including the faith leader outdoors (a child under 12 months not included), meeting all hygiene and distancing precautions and recording names and contact details of all present. 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); • For Regional Victoria: Baptisms may be may be celebrated under the worship for household's direction (a total of 5 including the celebrant with a child under 12 months not included in the number); or the outdoor gathering for 10 plus a celebrant. Note specific hygiene around use of oils and water. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers dependent on indoor or outdoor celebrations (see above). • 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; • Baptism by immersion or baptisms using already blessed water is to be avoided. Fresh water is to be used in every individual instance of baptism, and immediately drained afterwards. • Social distancing of all attendees; all (excluding baby) wear masks throughout. • Fresh water is blessed and used for each baptism. • The child to be baptised is held by the parents throughout. • The welcoming blessing of the child is done by the priest without touching the child. • The two anointings are done using single-use cotton buds. • The water is poured by the priest above the head of the child. • The dressing of the child in a white garment is done by the parents. • The lighting of the candle is done by the person holding the candle. • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; • if indoors, doors must remain closed to prevent public access; • 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: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community |
| | |
| <p>Weddings</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metropolitan Melbourne: Permitted in outdoor public spaces allowed with up to 5 people (the couple and the two witnesses). The faith leader and children under 12 months not included; |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional Victoria: Where weddings are permitted, up to 10 people may attend a wedding which includes the couple, the celebrant and two witnesses; ● 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; ● Physical distancing and building capacity limits must be maintained at all times; ● Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; ● Doors must remain closed to prevent public access; ● No lingering outside the church following the wedding; ● Following a wedding, the church must be cleaned in accordance with the guidance on routine environmental cleaning and disinfection in the community, available at: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community |
| | |
| Funerals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Metropolitan Melbourne: Up to 10 mourners may attend funeral in a place of worship as well as the minimum number of people required for the funeral, including the members of the funeral company. Children who are under one year of age are not counted in the 10-person limit; ● Regional Victoria: Up to 20 mourners may attend funeral in a place of worship as well as the minimum number of people required for the funeral, including the members of the funeral company. Children who are under one year of age are not counted in the 20 person limit; ● 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; ● Physical distancing and building capacity limits must be maintained at all times; ● Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; ● Doors must remain closed to prevent public access. ● No lingering outside the church following the funeral; ● Following a funeral, the church must be cleaned in accordance with the guidance on routine environmental cleaning and disinfection in the community, available at: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community ● It will not be possible to organise any refreshments in the Parish hall or centre after the funeral is concluded. ● Permission is granted to hold the funeral Liturgy in a funeral parlour, if the family so wish. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>Penance</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only the First Rite of Penance (individual confession and absolution) can be celebrated, because of the restrictions on numbers. The outdoor permits allowances may offer ways to bring this important sacrament to our people. All hygiene and distancing measures must be met. 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>Pastoral and Sacramental Visitation.</p> <p>Communion to, and Anointing of, the Sick</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important that the Sacrament of Anointing be available to those seriously ill and in danger of death, and may be given on request. <p>Homes: 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 who is at the end of their life. It is critical measures like face coverings and physical distancing are observed, and that the travel to the person’s home and the visit are limited to what is reasonably required and necessary (e.g. only required attendees should visit and just for the service).</p> <p>Hospitals or Care Facilities: 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). Such services can also be provided using video or live streaming, depending on religious tradition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general circumstances, if a Priest is requested to visit the home of a sick and dying person, he must take every precaution in relation to those who may be contagious. Holy Communion is not to be given to anyone in their homes or care facilities, including the sick and homebound, except as Viaticum for the dying, which may be administered only by Priests and Deacons, and complying with all hygiene precautions and the |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>protocols of the relevant hospitals or aged-care facilities (washing hands, etc.) as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As previously communicated, when Anointing the Sick, priests are given permission 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). ● Protective gloves could also be used, which can be disposed of appropriately after a single use. Anointing the head would be sufficient. ● If Viaticum is given, follow the guidelines below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow 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); - Avoid any physical contact with the person or family during the visit; - Use a hand sanitiser again before distributing Communion; - 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; - Wash or sanitise your hands after the visit; - Maintain optimum physical distance with everyone in the room, except the patient; - Do not offer comfort through any physical contact. ● It is encouraged that those Priests 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. ● Physical distancing to the extent possible, disinfecting hands before and after pastoral encounters, and other current measures must be applied at all times. |
| <p>Ministering to COVID-19 Patients</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health officials will be able to guide what is possible and permissible. |