



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#16 UPDATE: GENERAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Information Updated: Wednesday 16 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 Regional Victoria only, from 11:59pm on 16 September, 2020.**

REGIONAL VICTORIA **THIRD STEP**

- **Curfew:** not in place.
- **Leave Home:** no restrictions on reasons to leave home or distance you can travel but stay safe. Travel allowed across all areas in the Third Step (except to areas with higher restrictions).
- **Public Gatherings:** up to 10 people outdoors.
- **Weddings:** allowed with up to 10 people (including the couple and the two witnesses). The celebrant is not included in this number.
- **Funerals:** allowed with up to 20 people (infants under 12 months of age or people required to conduct the funeral not included in the limit).
- **Worship:** outdoor religious gatherings for up to 10 people plus a faith leader; places of worship can open for private worship for households and people who are in a bubble together (up to five people).
- **Visitors to the Home:** create a 'household bubble' with one nominated household allowing up to 5 visitors from that household at a time (infants under 12 months of age are not included in the cap).
- **Work:** Work from home if you can.
- **REVIEW:** [DHHS Victorian Roadmap for Regional Victoria](#)

Face coverings remain mandatory for people aged 12 and over when outdoors and in indoor public spaces. This remains in place for ceremonies and livestreaming where applicable.

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.

THIRD STEP – 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 GATHERINGS:** of up to **10 people, plus 1 (one) faith leader**, proximate to a place of worship, are allowed. Further clarification on this is being sought.
 - **WEDDINGS:** will be limited **to 10 people**, including the couple and the two witnesses. The celebrant is 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 must do so.**

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

Further information around workplaces have been provided.

FIRST STEP– 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 2 August, 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 be closed.
- **WEDDINGS:** No weddings are permitted unless an application is made to the DHHS for an exemption on compassionate grounds. If compassionate reasons permit a marriage ceremony to proceed, then only 5 people are allowed, comprising of the couple, two witnesses and the celebrant. People in Metropolitan Melbourne cannot travel to a wedding outside of metropolitan Melbourne.
- **FUNERALS:** will be limited to 10 mourners (**infants under 12 months of age not included in this number**). 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. You should not attend a funeral if you are feeling unwell.
- **BAPTISMS:** are to be postponed, unless there is an and grave pastoral need. (Can. 857; 860).
- **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.
- **CURFEW:** A Curfew is in place from 9pm until 5am each day. You may leave home for the purposes of essential work only.
- **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.

Further information around workplaces will be provided.

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

Masses, Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms (Reg Vic.), 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.
- Communicants must sanitise their hands before receiving 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.

- 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.
- A table with sanitiser should be made available for those receiving Holy Communion, who must sanitise before receiving.
- During the distribution of Communion, if the minister makes physical contact with the communicant, the minister will be required to sanitise his hand thoroughly. For such sanitisation to be possible, a table with hand sanitiser should also be placed in proximity to the minister distributing Communion.
- The Celebrant should direct congregants to receive Holy Communion in their hand by stretching out their arms with one hand flatly placed on top of the other, then taking steps to the side to place the host on the tongue.
- In order to minimise the possibility of contact with droplets between the communicant and minister, the most acceptable way to accommodate the dialogue that occurs between them might be the following:
 - The minister is to wear his mask throughout.
 - The communicant comes forward to a point 1.5m metres from the minister, removes one side of their mask, and sanitises their hands at a sanitation station provided nearby.
 - The communicant then enters into dialogue with the minister: “Body of Christ”; “Amen.” from the 1.5 metre distance.
 - The communicant, stretching out their arms with one hand flatly placed on top of the other, receives the Blessed Sacrament then steps to the side to place the host on their tongue.
 - The communicant replaces their mask and returns to their seat.
 - If there is any contact with a communicant’s hand or breath, the Minister must sanitise before distributing Holy Communion to the next communicant.
- For the health and safety of all involved, it is exhorted that Holy Communion should only be taken in the hand during this stage of pandemic restrictions, and Clergy should not encourage otherwise. If a communicant presents to receive on the tongue, they must wait until all others who are receiving in the hand have done so. A minister must immediately sanitise his hand every time a communicant receives Holy Communion on the tongue, and before proceeding.

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

It is recommended that you keep informed through the Department of Health and Human Services website for daily updates.

Priests Daily Mass and obligations

- Daily Mass should be offered for all God’s people, the faithful in Melbourne, and the wider community.

<p>Places of Worship and Gatherings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metropolitan Melbourne: Places of religion and worship remain closed for both religious ceremonies and private worship, but those who are necessary to stream a service can attend for these purposes. This is limited to up to five people. • 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: Baptisms are to be postponed, unless there is a grave pastoral need. (Can. 857; 860). 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 households 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. • Physical distancing and building capacity limits must be maintained at all times; • 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: Only for compassionate reasons and through application to DHHS. • 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;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Families may wish to arrange a larger Memorial Mass at a later date, and after the public emergency and relevant social restrictions have passed.
Penance	<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. This must be undertaken on a personal request basis

	<p>and be undertaken meeting all hygiene and distancing requirements noting the utilization of a screen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 reasonable 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 protocols of the relevant hospitals or aged-care facilities (washing hands, etc.) as appropriate. • 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).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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.