



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#27 UPDATE: GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Information Updated: Friday 12 February, 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.

Due to recent activity and emergency measures required, further changes to restrictions take effect from 11.59pm Friday 12 February 2021 for a period of five days, ending 11.59pm Wednesday 17 February 2021 unless otherwise notified.

The restrictions in place are compulsory as issued under lawful direction of the Chief Health Officer of Victoria, where a State of Emergency remains in place.

As of 11:59pm Friday 12 February 2021:

Everyone in Victoria aged 12 years and over must wear a fitted face covering when they leave home unless holding a medical exemption. This directive will apply to all areas of the Archdiocese for Masses and liturgies whether streamed or in person. If essential work is being undertaken in offices, masks must also be worn.

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 – STAGE 4 “5-day Circuit Breaker”

As of 11.59pm Friday 12 February 2021, and for a period of five days ending 11:59pm Wednesday 17 February 2021, unless otherwise notified.

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

	Requirements around hygiene and distancing must be met, along with the collection of contact details.
Places of Worship and Religious Gatherings	All places of worship including churches, adoration chapels and other church buildings used for public prayer and religious services are to be closed except for livestreaming (see restrictions) and funerals (see restrictions).
General Liturgical Guidelines	<p>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 can take place prudently.</p> <p>For the time being, all Catholics in Melbourne continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further directed by the Archbishop. We continue to carry the happy obligation to keep Sunday holy, whether we can attend Mass or not, and can do so by any kind of prayer with members of our household and parish, reading holy scripture, and encouraging one another in our faith. Prayerfully watching an online Mass continues to be a great source of comfort on Sundays.</p> <p>FACE COVERINGS and SANITISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is mandatory to wear fitted face coverings in all indoor and outdoor spaces unless you have a lawful reason not to do so, or are a child under 12 years of age. This includes cleaners, musicians or technicians for livestreaming. • For Clergy: Fitted face coverings 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 (Livestreaming). • Sanitiser must continue to be used regularly throughout the Liturgy and celebrants must visibly sanitise before and after the distribution of Holy Communion. <p>LITURGY OF THE WORD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings may be removed by readers and replaced when they have finished. <p>LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>HOLY COMMUNION</p> <p><i>The following information is designed to allow for the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass, where permitted, in a safe manner for both ministers</i></p>

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 latest announcements, the Archbishop has reviewed the measure that has been in place for the safe distribution of Holy Communion, and is now pleased to be able to lift the provisional requirement so that the Sacrament may be received without restriction both on the tongue and in the hand at the decision of the person who is distributing Holy Communion. The Archbishop leaves it to each minister distributing the sacrament to determine whether they feel comfortable doing so on the tongue at this stage. Everyone is asked to be patient – we have a number of clergy and people who are in a high risk category for their health due to age or other factors, so the lifting of this provision is subject to the minister in each circumstance. Ministers are asked to show care and regard for communicants, most of whom have not been at Mass in any regular way for most of the year.

Face coverings are to be worn throughout the celebration of Mass and the reception of Holy Communion.

The following directions are recommended:

The Priest or (minister):

- Sanitises hands before beginning distribution.
- Wears a face covering throughout distribution.
- Each communicant comes forward to a place approximately 1.5 metres away.
- Exchanges the dialogue, while both wearing face coverings.
- 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.
- Those receiving Holy Communion on the tongue should be requested to present last. It is advised that sanitation take place between each communicant in this instance.

The Communicant:

- Wears a face covering.
- Required distancing between communicants is maintained in the queue.
- Sanitises hands at a dispensing station before coming to receive Communion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engages in the dialogue and receives the host in the hand while wearing the face covering. - Steps several metres to the side, and away from the priest. - Repositions the face covering. - Returns to their seat via a different pathway.
Record Keeping	Faith organisations must keep a record of all attendees and visitors who attend the place of worship for longer than 15 minutes, including first name, contact number, date and time of visit and areas of the workplace or place of worship visited. These records must be kept for at least 28 days.
Signage	Where a place of worship has a publicly accessible space, faith organisations must display signage at each public entry to each indoor and outdoor space, indicating COVIDSafe hygiene and physical distancing requirements.
Cleaning	<p>Faith organisations should ensure shared spaces and public spaces are cleaned with disinfectant regularly, with high touch surfaces cleaned twice each day. Shared equipment should be cleaned between uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the current 5-day period, reusable and communal resources such as service sheets are not to be provided. Only single use print outs should be used.
Weddings	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, the two witnesses and the celebrant.
Funerals	<p>FUNERALS: will be limited to 10 mourners plus the minimum number required to conduct the funeral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • Face coverings must be worn indoors and outdoors and a distance of 1.5m between mourners must be maintained. • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; • Doors must remain closed to prevent public access. • No lingering outside the church following the funeral; • 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; • Following a funeral, the church must be cleaned in accordance with the guidance on routine environmental cleaning and disinfection in the community, available at:

	<p>https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community</p> <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.
Baptisms	BAPTISMS: are to be postponed, unless there is a grave pastoral need. (Can. 857; 860).
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 requests basis and be undertaken meeting all hygiene and distancing requirements. 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.
Livestreaming	LIVESTREAMING: a limit of 5 in total may be present, including the celebrant.
Social Gathering on Church Sites	<p>There are to be no social gatherings on church sites.</p> <p>Use/hire of church facilities for social functions is not possible at present due to restrictions and management of the service of food and drink.</p>
Public Gatherings in Public Spaces	No public gatherings are currently permitted in this 5 day period.
Home Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There can be no home visitations
Pastoral and Sacramental Visitation. Communion to, and Anointing of, the Sick	<p>No visitors are permitted into aged care, other residential facility settings, or Health Care settings, except for end-of-life reasons</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 Priests may offer Anointing to the sick and dying on request, and complying with the protocols of the relevant hospitals or aged-care facilities (washing hands, etc.) 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

	<p>precautions and the protocols of the relevant hospitals or aged-care facilities (washing hands, etc.) as appropriate.</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. ● 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 <i>Viaticum</i> is to be administered, follow the guidelines below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash hands or use a hand sanitiser once you enter the home; - 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, their Regional Vicar, or Fr Dean Mathieson to discuss who might be available to support them. <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>
<p>Ministering to COVID-19 Patients</p>	<p>Health officials will be able to guide what is possible and permissible.</p>