



## CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

### Updated Advice – 6 March 2020

### Additional Pastoral Recommendations – Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

#### To Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne continues to monitor the growing concerns related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and has expanded its response in line with national advice promulgated by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on 4 March 2020.

The following updated preventative measures should be appropriately communicated to the congregation and the broader Catholic community within the Archdiocese.

#### Holy Water:

- Holy Water should be temporarily removed from stoups at the doors of churches to reduce the possibility of transmission of the virus. Holy Water should continue to be available for people to take home.

#### Rite of Peace:

- When exchanging the Sign of Peace, individuals should avoid shaking hands but encouraged to say "Peace be with you" and offer a smile, wave, nod or bow.

#### Holy Communion:

- All Ministers of Holy Communion should take particular care to wash their hands before and after distribution. Appropriate means should be made available.
- Parishes should cease distributing Holy Communion from the Chalice until further notice. The faithful should be reminded that Christ is fully present under either species.
- The novel coronavirus is easily spread through saliva. In celebrations of the Ordinary Form of the Latin Rite, it is therefore recommended that the Body of Christ only be administered in the hand because of the high risk of transmission if people continue to receive on the tongue.
- Ministers should seek to avoid contact with the communicant's hands.

#### Vicar General's Office

St Patrick's Centre, 486 Albert Street, East Melbourne VIC 3002 Australia. PO Box 146, East Melbourne VIC 8002 Australia

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*The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.*

### **General Preventative:**

- Individuals should consider their own health, including any potential to infect others with a contagious disease, before attending a public liturgical celebration.
- Parishes and other settings where liturgies are celebrated should make alcohol-based gels or rubs (or like products) available near entrances. Similar provisions should be considered for settings used for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Visits to people in care homes or hospitals must follow advice from staff on infection control.

### **Divine Worship**

- Assure the faithful that are too unwell to attend Sunday Mass – whether due to novel coronavirus or some other condition – or are at particular risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus that they can honour their Sunday obligation by participating in a time of prayer within the home, reading the Scriptures or watching Mass online at <https://melbournecatholic.org.au/Mass>.

### **Intercession**

- The Lenten season is a purposeful opportunity in which we seek God and ask him to give us his heart for the suffering people of the world. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus is an invitation to continue our prayers for the healing and support for all affected.

Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) continues to work closely with the Victorian Department of Education and are jointly actively planning to manage the impact of this virus in our schools and wider school communities.

Additional information and access to daily alerts can be obtained from the Australian Government's Department of Health at <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne will continue to monitor advice from health authorities and will provide a further updates when required.

With best wishes and blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Caddy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Father Joe Caddy AM  
**VICAR GENERAL**

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