



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#3 | UPDATE: GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Information Updated: 4 May 2021, 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 directives announced by Government as part of its Roadmap for the reopening of the State of Victoria.

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 until **16 December 2021**.

As of 11:59pm Friday 9 April 2021, with additional:

- All people must carry a face covering when they leave home unless they have a lawful reason not to. Whilst it is not mandatory to wear a face covering indoors or outdoors it is strongly recommended that people wear a fitted face covering if the 1.5m personal distancing cannot be maintained.
<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks-when-wear-face-mask>
- Weddings, funerals and religious gatherings can occur with no limits on the number of guests or attendees, working within density limits. To ensure people can keep 1.5 metres distance the 'venue' must apply the two square metre rule. Anything conducted in a private home must apply the gathering limits for private homes.
- Religious gatherings can be held indoors or outdoors.
- Record keeping remains an important and critical tool for keeping all in the community safe.
- On-site office work is no longer capped. Workers in the private and public sectors can return to work at **100 per cent capacity**.
- The limit on the number of people gathering in a household is **100 in one day**, meaning the household members plus 100 visitors (excluding children under 12 months of age). There is no limit on the number of households those people come from. Front and backyards are considered part of the home.
- **Up to 200 people** can gather outdoors in a public space (beaches, parks etc.) from any number of households. Infants under 12 months are not included in the cap.

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

We welcome the opening up of our places of worship and opportunities for gathering, but remain mindful and respectful that many in our community will be feeling cautious and anxious in coming weeks, and that density quotients will prevent our full communities gathering as they would wish.

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.

Places of Worship and Religious Gatherings	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religious gatherings can be held indoors or outdoors. Venues must apply the 1 person per two square metre rule to ensure people have enough room to maintain 1.5 metres distance between them. There are no group limits other than the density quotients;• The two square metre rule must be used in conjunction with electronic record keeping. The square metre rule doesn't include babies under 12 months of age;• Record Keeping is required for all attendees beyond a 15-minute visit and must include: First Name + Contact Number + date and time at which the person attended the place of worship. Records must be kept for 28 days. Information regarding Record keeping and QR systems have been sent to parishes;• People must carry a fitted face covering at all times. Fitted face coverings are no longer mandatory indoors or outdoors (except in particular circumstances, note above), but should be worn by participants (unless they have a lawful exemption or are children under 12 years of age) if a distance of 1.5m cannot be maintained.• Hygiene precautions must continue to be maintained throughout;• A place of worship can have indoor or outdoor religious gatherings at the same time.• Places of worship can continue to be open for essential public support services. Essential public support services include food banks, help for people experiencing homelessness or other essential activities. A distance of at least 1.5 metres must be kept between people.
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	<p>OUTDOOR RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of worship may hold religious ceremonies outdoors (note spaces below); • It is recommended that fitted face coverings be worn outdoors if a distance of 1.5m between persons cannot be maintained; • Outdoor religious gatherings must be held in an outdoor space that is near to the place of worship hosting the service. This means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a service could be held on the grounds of a place of worship or in the car park; - a public outdoor space, like a park, close to the place of worship. You may need a permit from your local council. You can find your local council using Know Your Council; - schools that want to host an outdoor religious ceremony should do so near their place of worship. For many schools this could be the school’s oval or sports grounds (if, for example the school assembly hall is used for religious activities and is therefore a place of worship). Schools can find further information on advice for schools and through Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools.
<p>General Liturgical Guidelines</p>	<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 continued limitations of restrictions, 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.</p> <p>As noted above, we welcome the further opening up of our places of worship and opportunities for gathering, but remain mindful and respectful that many in our community will be cautious and anxious in coming weeks.</p> <p>FACE COVERINGS and SANITISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings are no longer mandatory. However, they are required if the distancing measures of 1.5m cannot be maintained between people. We must also be respectful of those who ‘want’ to wear them. • Wearing a fitted face covering is strongly recommended outdoors if a distance of 1.5 metres from other people cannot be maintained. • Sanitiser must continue to be used regularly throughout the Liturgy, and celebrants must visibly sanitise before and after

the distribution of Holy Communion.

SINGING (see reference further below)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Face coverings are not mandatory for readers.

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 COVIDSafe planning phase we are now able to gather in greater 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.

The Archbishop has reviewed the measures that had been in place for the safe distribution of Holy Communion. 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.

Fitted face coverings throughout the celebration of Mass and the reception of Holy Communion are no longer mandatory unless a distance of 1.5m cannot be maintained.
The following directions are recommended:

The Priest or (minister):

- Sanitises hands before beginning distribution.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each communicant comes forward to a place approximately 1.5 metres away. - Exchanges the dialogue. - 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. <p>The Communicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required distancing between communicants is maintained in the queue. - Sanitises hands at a dispensing station before coming to receive Communion. - Engages in the dialogue and receives the host in the hand. - Steps several metres to the side, and away from the priest. - Returns to their seat via a different pathway.
Singing	<p>Singing is permitted. Group singing is safest when the following measures are applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - singing outside or in a well-ventilated room (with windows open); - physical distancing of at least 2 metres between each person while singing; - short performances (of less than an hour); - singing softly. <p>Fans, free standing or ceiling, are not recommended for use in enclosed indoor spaces for singing. Performers should be 5 meters from the audience where practical.</p>
Private Worship	<p>Places of worship are open for private worship, for example individual prayer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no specific limit on, or time for private prayer, but all distancing, hygiene and density quotients must be met. This should form part of the COVIDsafe plan. Note record keeping requirements below.
Record Keeping	<p>All venues, including those of faith organisations, must apply the two square metre rule and use electronic record keeping through the free Victorian Government QR Code Service or Victorian Government Application Programming Interface (API) linked digital system for attendees and visitors who attend the place of worship</p>

	for longer than 15 minutes. These records must be kept for at least 28 days. Information regarding Record keeping and QR systems have been sent to parishes.
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 maximum capacity, 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"> • Reusable and communal resources such as service sheets, religious texts, etc. may be used but must be cleaned between uses. It is recommended that single use print outs be used, or people should be encouraged to bring their own items of significance. • Devotional items may be left in place but must be venerated in ways that do not involve touching or kissing them (such as by bowing or other faith appropriate action).
Weddings	<p>Weddings can be held indoors or outdoors. A place of worship must apply the two square metre rule to ensure people have enough room to maintain 1.5 metres distance between them. There are no maximum attendee caps indoors or outdoors dependent on the density allowances. The square metre rule includes the couple and the celebrant, but not the photographer. Children under babies 12 months of age are not included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; • It is strongly recommended that fitted face coverings be worn indoors and outdoors when a distance of 1.5 metres from other people cannot be maintained. • A photographer is not counted as a guest under the wedding gathering limits. There is no limit on the number of photographers or videographers for each wedding. When taking photos, a photographer should always stay 1.5 metres away from others. • 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	Funerals can be held indoors or outdoors. The place of worship must apply the two square metre rule to ensure people have enough room to maintain 1.5 metres distance between them. There are no

	<p>maximum attendee caps indoors or outdoors dependent on the density allowances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The square metre rule doesn't include the people required to conduct the funeral; • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; • It is strongly recommended that fitted face coverings be worn indoors and outdoors when a distance of 1.5 metres from other people cannot be maintained; • It is possible to have minimal refreshments in the Parish hall or centre after the funeral is concluded, please note below the section on Social Gatherings. The hall or space must also be assessed for its capacity using the two square metre rule. • 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: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community
<p>Baptisms</p>	<p>Baptisms may be celebrated under the latest outdoor and indoor religious gathering limits and record keeping protocols. Note specific hygiene precautions must still be maintained around use of oils and water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • 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 physical contact with the child; • The two anointings are done using single-use cotton buds; • The water is poured by the priest on the head of the child from above; • 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; • It is strongly recommended that fitted face coverings be worn indoors and outdoors when a distance of 1.5 metres from other people cannot be maintained; • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; • Following a Baptism indoors, the church must be cleaned in accordance with the guidance on routine environmental

	<p>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>
Penance	<p>First and Second Rite of Reconciliation may be celebrated. All hygiene and distancing measures must be met at all times.</p> <p>Record keeping is not mandatory if confidentiality is required and people are present for no more than 15 minutes. NOTE: This applies also to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.</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>
Confirmations	<p>NOTE: All Clergy have received information regarding planning for Confirmations in 2021.</p> <p>A. Preparing for the Celebration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In consultation with the Regional Vicar, 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 wearing of face coverings indoors, density and hygiene precautions to determine the numbers of people allowed to be present in a church. - In consultation with the Regional Vicar, 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. <p>B. The Celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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/sponsor are to wear a face covering 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.

- The Priest is to sanitise his hands prior to the anointing with Chrism.

- 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.

- The Priest should use sanitiser as often as needed.

- 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.

- If needed, more Chrism can be obtained from the Cathedral in the usual way.

Gesture of Peace:

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.

Other Actions:

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.).

Sponsor/s:

If the density quotient for a church does not allow large enough numbers to be present, it is encouraged that one proxy sponsor stand in the place of the sponsors for all the candidates to be

	<p>confirmed in a single Liturgy. If adequate spacing and capacity allows, each candidate may have their individual sponsor present along with family. 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, and must wear their face covering at all times unless they are a member of the household.</p> <p><i>Other Considerations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If pictures are requested by the Confirmandi for their families, it should be taken in a planned and orderly manner so as to observe physical distancing at all times. - Simple gatherings after the celebration of Confirmation may take place and must follow the directives under Social Gatherings. - When recording in the Register the name of the priest who has confirmed, note is to be made of the delegation granted by the Regional Vicar, if appropriate. The same applies in notifying the Parish of Baptism of the one confirmed. It is the Sponsor's name, not the name of the proxy sponsor that should be registered.
Livestreaming	Follows the indoor limits for gathering (see above for the rules on spacing). Technicians must be included in this limit.
Social Gathering on Church Sites	Food or drink can be served for the purpose of hospitality before or after a religious gathering, for example providing congregants with tea, coffee and refreshments. It is recommended that single use items are used to serve food or drink, and that only designated people serve or distribute food or drinks. (For example, one designated person uses the urn to dispense hot water for tea, or one person serves food using tongs and gloves). No self-serve buffet-style set ups should be used. Density capacity on any church premises must also be met (1 person per two square metre rule and use of electronic record keeping).
Public Gatherings in Public Spaces	Permitted up to 200 people from across multiple households, friends and/or family, outdoors. Infants under 12 months not included in the cap. A public place means an area that everyone can access, for example a local park or the beach. It is strongly recommended that fitted face coverings should be worn if the 1.5m distancing between people cannot be maintained.
Home Visits	<p>Each day, a household can receive up to 100 different visitors per day, including dependents, either together or separately. Infants under 12 months are excluded from the visitor cap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious gatherings and prayer groups held at a private residence are subject to the private gathering limit. • It is strongly recommended that participants wear fitted face coverings if a personal distance of 1.5m metres cannot be maintained.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact details must be recorded. • Faith leaders and pastoral ministers may visit someone in their home to provide religious guidance, to perform rituals or for care and compassionate reasons. All hygiene and distancing measures should be observed.
Hospitals or Care Facilities	<p>There are no restrictions on purpose, number or time of visits.</p> <p>It should be noted that visitors will still be limited by rules of the care facility. This means that the number of visits, the length of the visit and the purpose of the visit are limited by the visiting rules set by the hospital. Rules may vary between hospitals to reflect different risks. For further information please visit: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/visiting-hospitals</p> <p>Visitors to any hospital or Care Facility across Victoria must wear a fitted face covering. Contact should be made with the hospital or facility before visiting as they may have additional requirements, conditions or restrictions for visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). • Protective gloves could also be used, which can be disposed of appropriately after a single use. Anointing the head would be sufficient. • If Holy Communion is given, follow the guidelines below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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; - 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. <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>

Ministering to COVID-19 Patients	Health officials will be able to guide what is possible and permissible.
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