



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#53 UPDATE: GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Information Updated: 18 November 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.

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 Thursday 18 November 2021, the following measures will be applied throughout Victoria. These will be in place until otherwise advised, and except where particular LGAs might be placed under different restrictions for limited periods of time.

	VICTORIA
Face Coverings	<p>Face coverings are required indoors only in limited settings including retail, health care, aged care and justice facilities, at primary schools and on public transport/taxis/rideshare.</p> <p>It is recommended that face coverings be worn if you can't physically distance, if you have any symptoms, or if you are with people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19.</p>
Vaccinations	<p>A person is considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 for the purposes of attending a Place of Worship if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, or• have a valid and authorised medical exemption to COVID-19 vaccination or• are aged under 12 years and 2 months. <p>If a person can show evidence of any of the above, they can enter as fully vaccinated. If they cannot show evidence of any of the above, they are not considered as fully vaccinated and may only participate in groups allowing for 'unknown vaccination status.'</p>
Religious Gatherings Funerals and Weddings	<p>Fully Vaccinated 12 years + 2 months and over: Places of worship may open for all celebrations, including weddings and funerals, for fully vaccinated attendees with no capacity limits or density limits.</p> <p>Unknown Vaccination Status: If vaccination status isn't being checked, or status of attendees is unknown, these events are restricted to one person per 4 sqm up to a maximum of 50 people per facility.</p>

	<p>The cap at funerals doesn't include those required to conduct the funeral and the cap at weddings doesn't include the marrying couple, celebrant or photographer. Children under 12 months old are not counted towards caps.</p> <p><i>The Archbishop has indicated that at least one (if not more) 'unknown vaccination status' Masses should be offered in each Parish per week to enable the faithful to attend. Separate liturgies of 'unknown vaccination status' should also be considered for families of children receiving first Sacraments where one or both of the parents or sponsors are not fully vaccinated.</i></p>
Community (Parish) Facilities	Fully vaccinated only, no limits apply.
Leaving Home	<p>There are no limits on travel in Victoria.</p> <p>There are no limits on leaving Victoria but travel may be impacted by rules at a person's destination.</p>
Private Gatherings in the home. Public Gatherings (park, beach etc.)	<p>There are no limits on the number of people you can gather with in your home or in public places (e.g., a park or a beach).</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that everyone be fully vaccinated.</p>
Care Facility Visitors Hospital Visitors	<p>There are limits on attending high-risk settings, even when fully vaccinated. Residents at care facilities can have up to five visitors per day including dependents for any reason. We strongly recommend that all residents and visitors are fully vaccinated. Visitors to hospitals are still limited to a small number of circumstances, such as end-of-life.</p>

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 remain feeling cautious and anxious, and that our communities still cannot gather fully and united 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 participating in online Mass continues to be a great source of comfort on Sundays.

Places of Worship and Religious Gatherings	<p>In Victoria, Places of Worship may welcome....</p> <p>Fully Vaccinated 12 years + 2 months and over – no limits Unknown Vaccination Status - Indoors & Outdoors cap of 50. DQ4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 12 months old are not counted towards caps.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workplaces must have a COVIDSafe Plan and keep records of everyone attending using the Service Victoria app. • Places of Worship must also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regularly clean and disinfect shared spaces and high touch surfaces. - display signage in public spaces providing information about check-in, vaccination requirements and where relevant, face covering requirements. • A COVID Check-in Marshal must be present. For role of a Marshal please visit: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covid-check-in-marshals • Proof of vaccination, or vaccination exemption, status to be sighted via the Victoria Services App (Tick indicator). Vaccination Exemptions can be linked to your Victoria Services App. • For those with hard copy certificates, record should be taken of Name, Contact and Acknowledgement of vaccination proof or vaccination exemption. This record must be kept securely for 28 days.
<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.</p> <p>FACE COVERINGS and SANITISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is encouraged that face coverings be worn indoors if suitable distancing cannot be maintained. • Sanitiser must continue to be used regularly throughout Liturgies, and celebrants must visibly sanitise before and after the distribution of Holy Communion. • For Clergy: face coverings do not need to be worn entering Mass or during the celebration of Mass, but should be considered during the distribution of Holy Communion. <p>SINGING is permitted</p> <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. • All concelebrating priests must intinct, thereby receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. <p>HOLY COMMUNION</p> <p>Receiving Our Lord is a moment of great significance and of personal intimacy with Jesus, and the Church. For many months we have been following best practice in the respectful, dignified and safe distribution of Holy Communion at Mass 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.</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>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 more than eighteen months.</p> <p>As we now welcome the broader opening of our Places of Worship, you are asked to continue maintaining good hygiene and safety practices, using common sense in determining what is best for your communities. The following directions are recommended:</p> <p>The Priest or (minister) and Communicant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicants are only to receive the Host, there is to be no sharing of the Chalice. - Minister sanitises hands before beginning distribution. - Sanitiser stations should be made available for communicants and encouragement given to safe distancing in approaching for reception. - 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. - Minister must sanitise their 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. - Face coverings should be worn if physical distancing cannot be maintained.
Record Keeping	<p>All venues for faith organisations must use electronic record keeping through the free Victorian Services App and apply density rules where applicable (unknown status gatherings).</p> <p>A Covid Marshal must be present at worship, prayer services and parish meetings etc. to assist with registrations and vaccination monitoring.</p> <p>Proof of vaccination, or exemption from, records must be kept for those who do not use the Victoria Services App, including Name, Contact, and Vaccination status. These records must be kept securely for 28 days.</p>
Signage and Cleaning	<p>Places of Worship must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regularly clean and disinfect shared spaces and high touch surfaces. - display signage in public spaces providing information about check-in, vaccination requirements and where relevant, face covering requirements. <p>Signage at entrances should indicate if the current service being held is for vaccinated or unknown vaccinated participants.</p>

<p>Weddings</p>	<p>In Victoria, Places of Worship may welcome.... Fully Vaccinated 12 years + 2 months and over: no limits Unknown Vaccination Status: Indoors & Outdoors cap of 50. DQ4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 12 months old are not counted towards caps. • Caps not inclusive of marrying couple plus those necessary to conduct wedding. • All Places of worship must have a COVIDSafe Plan and keep records of everyone attending using the Service Victoria app. • Places of worship must also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regularly clean and disinfect shared spaces and high touch surfaces. - display signage in public spaces providing information about check-in, vaccination requirements and where relevant, face covering requirements. • A COVID Check-in Marshal must be present. For role of a Marshal please visit: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covid-check-in-marshals • Proof of vaccination, or vaccination exemption, status to be sighted via the Victoria Services App (Tick indicator). Vaccination Exemptions can be linked to your Victoria Services App. • For those with hard copy certificates, record should be taken of Name, Contact and Acknowledgement of vaccination proof or vaccination exemption. This record must be kept securely for 28 days.
<p>Funerals</p>	<p>In Victoria, Places of Worship may welcome.... Fully Vaccinated 12 years + 2 months and over: no limits Unknown Vaccination Status - Indoors & Outdoors cap of 50. DQ4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 12 months old are not counted towards caps. • Caps not inclusive of those necessary to conduct the funeral. • All workplaces must have a COVIDSafe Plan and keep records of everyone attending using the Service Victoria app. • Places of worship must also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regularly clean and disinfect shared spaces and high touch surfaces. - display signage in public spaces providing information about check-in, vaccination requirements and where relevant, face covering requirements. • A COVID Check-in Marshal must be present. For role of a Marshal please visit: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covid-check-in-marshals • Proof of vaccination, or vaccination exemption, status to be sighted via the Victoria Services App (Tick indicator). Vaccination Exemptions can be linked to your Victoria Services App. • For those with hard copy certificates, record should be taken of Name, Contact and Acknowledgement of vaccination proof or vaccination exemption. This record must be kept securely for 28 days. <p><i>Refer to email sent to Parishes and Clergy 18 August 2021 confirming that Pall Bearers must either be part of the permitted number cap or be provided by the Funeral Service provide in Unknown Vaccination Status services.</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission is granted to hold the funeral liturgy in a funeral parlour if the family so wish. This is to be a Funeral Service and not a Funeral Mass.
Baptisms	<p>Baptisms may be celebrated under the latest indoor and outdoor Religious Gatherings and Ceremonies limits for Victoria according to the vaccination status guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common sense around hygiene matters should be maintained. • Baptism by immersion or baptisms using already blessed water should be avoided. • Fresh water is blessed and used for each baptism. • The child to be baptised is held by the parents throughout. • 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. • All Places of Worship must have a COVIDSafe Plan and keep records of everyone attending using the Service Victoria app. • Places of worship must also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regularly clean and disinfect shared spaces and high touch surfaces. - display signage in public spaces providing information about check-in, vaccination requirements and where relevant, face covering requirements. • A COVID Check-in Marshal must be present. For role of a Marshal please visit: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covid-check-in-marshals • Proof of vaccination, or vaccination exemption, status to be sighted via the Victoria Services App (Tick indicator). Vaccination Exemptions can be linked to your Victoria Services App. • For those with hard copy certificates, record should be taken of Name, Contact and Acknowledgement of vaccination proof or vaccination exemption. This record must be kept securely for 28 days.
Penance	<p>Reconciliation may be celebrated in line with all applicable vaccination, density, distancing, and hygiene regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of times and appropriate cap numbers should enable the Sacrament to be available for all people (vaccinated or unknown vaccination status). Clear signage indicating this is essential. • To enable privacy for people attending the Sacrament, consideration should be given for Penance to be offered during particular times either before or after Mass, or set times of Private worship, so that Check-in doesn't intrude on the private nature of attendance. • Face coverings should be worn if physical distancing cannot be maintained adequately. • 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 Cans.961 and 962 are to be met and applied for validity.

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Confirmations	<p>Confirmations may be celebrated in line with all applicable vaccination, density, distancing, and hygiene regulations.</p> <p><i>[It is important to note that Vaccination status applies to everyone present. If a person over 12 years + 2 months of age is of unknown status, then the permissible numbers are reduced to 50 indoors.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In consultation with the Auxiliary Bishop or 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 allowable guidelines of the school community. - 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. - 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. <p>B. The Celebration and Gestures during Confirmation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common sense around hygiene matters should be maintained. - The Sacrament is to be celebrated using the approved Rite of Confirmation (within Mass or Outside of Mass). <p><i>Anointing with Chrism:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - 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.

	<p>- If needed, more Chrism can be obtained from the Cathedral in the usual way.</p> <p><i>Other Considerations</i></p> <p>- 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.</p> <p>As with all current allowances: A COVID Check-In Marshal must be present. For role of a Marshal please visit: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covid-check-in-marshals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of worship must use electronic record keeping through the Victoria Services QR Services App. • Proof of vaccination, or vaccination exemption, status to be sighted via the Victoria Services App (Tick indicator). Vaccination Exemptions can be linked to your Victoria Services App. • It is noted that those under 16 years of age are not required to produce proof of vaccination status. • For those with hard copy certificates, record should be taken of Name, Contact and Acknowledgement of vaccination proof or vaccination exemption. This record must be kept securely for 28 days. • Booking systems – such as Trybooking or Genius, are recommended to assist in monitoring permitted numbers.
<p>Gathering on Church Sites</p>	<p>Parish sites can welcome:</p> <p>Fully vaccinated 12 years + 2 months over only: no limits</p> <p>If the facility is being used for an essential service (e.g., hosting a soup kitchen or food bank) then people attending aren't required to be vaccinated, as long as the patron cap does not exceed 50 per facility.</p> <p>Mandatory QR Code entry and vaccination record keeping must be in place in line with other gatherings.</p>
<p>Home Visits</p> <p>Public Gatherings in Public Spaces</p>	<p>There are no limits on the number of people you can gather with in your home or in public places (e.g., a park or a beach).</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that everyone be fully vaccinated.</p>
<p>Hospitals or Care Facilities</p>	<p>There are limits on attending high-risk settings, even when fully vaccinated. Residents at care facilities can have up to five visitors per day including dependents for any reason. We strongly recommend that all residents and visitors are fully vaccinated. Visitors to hospitals are still limited to a small number of circumstances, such as end-of-life.</p>
<p>Ministering to COVID-19 Patients</p>	<p>Health officials will be able to guide what is possible and permissible.</p>