



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#41 UPDATE: GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Information Updated: 27 July 2021, 12:00pm

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 Tuesday 27 July 2021**, the following measures will apply across **Metropolitan Melbourne** and **Regional Victoria** until otherwise advised.

	Regional Victoria and Metropolitan Melbourne
Face Coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be carried at all times• Must be worn indoors and outdoors except if at home or if an exception applies.
Religious Gatherings and Ceremonies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permitted for up to 100 people indoors and up to 300 people outdoors.• Density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies.• A venue smaller than 100sqm can have up to 25 people per venue before density quotient applies.• COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure attendees check-in.
Funerals	Indoors and Outdoors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permitted for up to 50 people (plus those necessary to conduct the funeral), subject to venue density limits.• Children under 12 months old are not counted towards this cap.• COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure attendees check-in.
Weddings	Indoors and Outdoors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permitted with no more than 50 people (including the couple and witnesses), subject to density limits for the venue.• Celebrant and photographer are not counted towards this cap.• COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure attendees check-in.

Leaving home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can leave home for any reason. • Movement between Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria unrestricted.
Private Gatherings in the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not permitted. • Single bubble permitted.
Public Gatherings (park, beach etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted for up to 10 people.
Care Facility Visitors	<p>Visitors are permitted into care facilities for reasons that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide care and support for the resident's physical and emotional wellbeing. • To support residents under 18 years of age. • As a nominated person under the Mental Health Act. • To provide interpreter or informal language support. • For learning to support the resident's care upon discharge. • Non-essential contractors are restricted from entry.
Hospital Visitors	<p>Visitors are permitted into hospitals for reasons that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a parent, guardian or carer of a child who is a patient in hospital. • To provide support that is necessary for the patient's emotional or physical wellbeing. • As a nominated person under the Mental Health Act. • To provide interpreter or informal language support. • For learning to support the resident's care upon discharge. • As a carer of a patient with a disability. • Accompanying someone to the emergency department or outpatient clinic. • As a partner of a pregnant woman or patient in a maternity ward. • Non-essential contractors are restricted from entry.
Work	<p>If you can work from home, you should work from home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office work – 25 per cent return or up to 10 people if total workplace is 40 or less, density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies.
QR Contact tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-min threshold removed. • All venue attendees must register.

Note: *Cleaning, signage, record keeping, and other COVIDSafe requirements continue to apply for all venues and facilities with onsite operations as per the Workplace Directions. The Density Quotient applies to all venues and spaces that are accessible to the public (and in closed workplaces, to shared spaces such as lunchrooms). Remember to always check in at every venue using the Service Vic QR Code app*

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 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.

<p>Places of Worship and Religious Gatherings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted for up to 100 people indoors and up to 300 people outdoors. • Density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies. • A venue smaller than 100sqm can have up to 25 people per venue before density quotient applies. • Places of worship must use electronic record keeping through the free Victorian Government QR Code Service. coronavirus.vic.gov.au/qrcode; • COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure attendees check-in. • The 15-min threshold has been removed and all venue attendees must register via the QR Code system; • Face coverings must be worn indoors and outdoors in places of worship unless an exception applies. • Hygiene precautions must be maintained at all times; • 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. • Outdoor religious gatherings must be held in an outdoor space that is near to the place of worship hosting the service. Note number capacity regulations listed above. 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. Schools can find further information on advice for schools and through Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS).
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**General
Liturgical
Guidelines**

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.

FACE COVERINGS and SANITISING

- All Victorians must carry a face covering when they leave home unless they have a lawful reason not to. Face coverings must be worn indoors and outdoors in places of worship, except if an exception applies.
- Sanitiser must continue to be used regularly throughout the Liturgy, and celebrants must visibly sanitise before and after the distribution of Holy Communion.
- For Clergy: A reminder that face coverings must 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.

SINGING (see reference further below)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In Regional Victoria and Metropolitan Melbourne:

- All participants must wear a face covering when indoors at places of worship at all times, unless under 12 years of age or have a lawful reason not to.
- The reader may lower his/her face covering for the readings. This applies as well for the Universal Prayer.
- This same direction is extended for a cantor (or singers where further numbers permit): when the cantor is singing, the face covering 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.
- All concelebrating priests must intinct, thereby receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

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.

We are now able to gather, even though with small 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 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.

All participants must wear a face covering indoors at places of worship at all times, unless under 12 years of age or have a lawful reason not to;

The following directions are recommended:

The Priest or (minister) and Communicant.

In Regional Victoria and Metropolitan Melbourne as follows:

Face Coverings are to be worn for the distribution of Holy Communion.

- Communicants are only to receive the Host, there is to be no sharing of the Chalice.
- Instructions on receiving Holy Communion should be given to communicants at the time of the Fraction Rite.
- Minister sanitises hands before beginning distribution.
- Each communicant comes forward to a place approximately 1.5 metres away from the minister and removes one side of their face covering, 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.
- Minister places the host slightly above the outstretched and flat hands of the communicant who receives the Blessed Sacrament then steps to the side to place the host on their tongue.
- The communicant replaces their face covering and returns to their seat.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
Singing	<p>Singing is permitted under certain conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Victorians must wear face coverings indoors at places of worship – this includes the congregation when singing. This will create difficulties for singing, and congregants should be encouraged to either refrain from singing, or to do so softly. - Face coverings must be worn by cantors or choirs indoors. They may be removed during the period of singing but must be replaced and worn otherwise. <p>Further recommendations when singing can take place include:</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; - 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.
Private Worship	<p>Places of worship may be open for private worship in Victoria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings must be worn by anyone attending indoor prayer; • There is no specific limit on time for private prayer, but all number caps for Places of Worship and density quotients must be adhered to, as well as distancing, hygiene precautions. All factors should form part of the parish COVIDsafe plans; • Note record keeping requirements below.
Record Keeping	<p>All venues for faith organisations, must apply the appropriate density quotient rule and use electronic record keeping through the free Victorian Government QR Code Service.</p> <p>To allow permitted numbers a COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure attendees check-in.</p>
Signage	<p>Where a place of worship has a publicly accessible space, faith organisations must display signage at each public entry to each indoor</p>

	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 under the following conditions:</p> <p>Weddings are permitted with no more than 50 people (including the two persons being married and two witnesses), subject to density limits for the venue. The celebrant and the photographer are not included in the cap. Children under 12 months of age are not included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings must be worn by all participants indoors, except the Bride and Groom who do not need to wear face coverings during the ceremony. • Face coverings can be removed for photos, but people must be encouraged to stay 1.5m away from others. • COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure attendees check-in; • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; • Face coverings must be worn outdoors unless an exception applies; • Following a wedding, the church must be cleaned.
Funerals	<p>Funerals can be held indoors or outdoors under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funerals are permitted with up to 50 people plus those necessary to conduct the funerals, subject to density limits for the venue. • Children under 12 months old are not counted towards this cap; • Face coverings must be worn by all participants including those conducting the funeral and any technicians or musicians; • COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure attendees check-in; • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; • 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.

<p>Baptisms</p>	<p>Baptisms may be celebrated in Victoria under the latest indoor and outdoor Religious Gatherings and Ceremonies limits for places of worship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants must wear a face covering when indoors in places of worship at all times, unless under 12 years of age or have a lawful reason not to. • Face coverings can be removed for photos, but people must be encouraged to stay 1.5m away from others; • 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; • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout; • Following a Baptism indoors, the church must be cleaned.
<p>Penance</p>	<p>First and Second Rite of Reconciliation may be celebrated in line with all applicable density, distancing and hygiene regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings must be worn indoors at all times in places of worship; • The 15 mins threshold has been removed, and Record Keeping is now mandatory; • 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.
<p>Confirmations</p>	<p>Confirmations may be celebrated subject to venue density limits, distancing and hygiene regulations.</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;
- 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.

B. The Celebration

- The Sacrament is to be celebrated using the approved Rite of Confirmation (within Mass or Outside of Mass);
- **All participants, including the celebrant, must wear face coverings unless they are under 12 years of age or have a lawful reason not to;**
- 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.

	<p>- 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> <p>- If needed, more Chrism can be obtained from the Cathedral in the usual way.</p> <p><i>Gesture of Peace:</i> The gesture of peace (e.g. 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.</p> <p><i>Other Actions:</i> 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.).</p> <p><i>Sponsor/s:</i> 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 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	Technicians are included in the number limits and must adhere to density quotients and distancing. Face coverings must be worn indoors in places of worship.
Gathering on Church Sites	Gatherings and meetings on Church sites (Parish Halls) can take place under specific guidelines. Following Government directives for Community Facilities and for Places of Worship, gathering on Church Sites can take place under the following. Please note that Weddings and Funerals are exceptions:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm for the space applies. • A COVID Check-in Marshall must be used to ensure attendees check-in. • Maximum group sizing of 10 people. • Mandatory QR Code record keeping must be in place; • Masks must be worn indoors at all times. <p>Food or drink may be served at such meetings or gatherings, 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.</p>
<p>Public Gatherings in Public Spaces</p>	<p>Up to 10 people are permitted from across multiple households, friends and/or family, outdoors. Infants under 12 months not included in the cap.</p> <p>A public place means an area that everyone can access, for example a local park or the beach. Face coverings must be worn outdoors.</p>
<p>Home Visits</p>	<p>No home/private gatherings are permitted other than single bubbles</p>
<p>Hospitals or Care Facilities</p>	<p>Visitors are permitted into care facilities for reasons that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide care and support for the resident’s physical and emotional wellbeing. - To support residents under 18 years of age. - As a nominated person under the Mental Health Act. - To provide interpreter or informal language support. - For learning to support the resident’s care upon discharge. - Non-essential contractors are restricted from entry. <p>Visitors are permitted into hospitals for reasons that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a parent, guardian or carer of a child who is a patient in hospital. - To provide support that is necessary for the patient’s emotional or physical wellbeing. - As a nominated person under the Mental Health Act. - To provide interpreter or informal language support. - For learning to support the resident’s care upon discharge. - As a carer of a patient with a disability. - Accompanying someone to the emergency department or outpatient clinic. - As a partner of a pregnant woman or patient in a maternity ward. - Non-essential contractors are restricted from entry. <p>Visitors to any Hospital or Care Facility across Victoria must wear a fitted face covering. Contact should be made with the</p>

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