

Covid-19 FAQs

1. What if I can't get to Confession

If you cannot get to Confession then do not be afraid – God's love and mercy overcomes even the current restrictions. Just tell God the sins you have committed, tell Him that you truly love Him and that you are truly sorry for what you have done, tell Him that you intend not to commit these sins again and that you intend to go to sacramental Confession as soon as matters return to normal.

2. Can I go to Confession by telephone or using a video messaging app?

The confessor and the penitent need to be both actually present for the Sacrament. This is true of every Sacrament – just as a priest cannot consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ by phone so he cannot absolve sins by phone.

3. What if a relative gets sick and cannot receive the Sacrament of the Sick?

In the present circumstances, when the Sacrament of Anointing is not able to be celebrated, the priest can pray with the sick person and relatives by telephone. If it is appropriate, the priest may help the sick person to make a perfect act of contrition, through which our sins are forgiven. Pope Francis has also offered a Plenary Indulgence for these circumstances. (For more information about the indulgence you can click [here](#))

4. What about my Sunday Obligation?

Since we are unable to attend Mass due to the restrictions closing churches, banning gatherings, and keeping people at home, it is genuinely impossible to fulfil our Sunday Obligation. In these circumstances we are dispensed from our Sunday obligation and it is not a sin to miss Mass. We should, however, still try to keep Sunday holy by spending time in prayer and avoiding unnecessary work.

5. Good Friday Fast & Abstinence

Despite the present circumstances, we should make the effort to fast and to abstain from meat on Good Friday (under the usual conditions – only those over 14 are obliged to abstain and only those over 18 and under 60 are obliged to fast – although people outside those age-ranges are encouraged to join in as much as they can).

If however your health, or your inability to get to the shops, or your need to care for others, etc., makes it impossible or very difficult for you to fast or abstain from meat, you can choose some other form of penance instead.

6. What about my Easter duties?

All Catholics who have made their First Communion should Confess and receive Holy Communion at least once a year. Although this would normally take place around Easter time, a just cause allows us to fulfil it at some other point in the year. The current crisis is definitely a just cause that allows us to go to Confession and Communion later in the year and still fulfil this obligation.

7. Marriages

The Government has prohibited any marriages from taking place and the Registrar will not issue a Marriage Schedule, which is the document that is required before a wedding can take place. For most couples, this will mean having to postpone their weddings until the current situation eases. Please speak to the priest or deacon who is organising your wedding about this. Obviously, at this point, it would be unwise to set a date until such time as the situation is clearer.

8. Baptisms

Baptisms (both adults and children) will normally have to be postponed until after the current restrictions are lifted.

If the person to be baptised is in real danger of death, then anyone, even a non-baptised person (e.g. a nurse or doctor, if family members or chaplains cannot access the person), can baptise them (if asked by an adult or if asked by the

parents of a child). In such a situation of danger of death, the person who baptises must pour water over the candidate's head whilst saying at the same time, *"I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"*. A note should be made of this and the parish priest informed. If the person in danger of death survives, the parish priest will celebrate the other parts of the Rite of Baptism once the current restrictions are lifted.

9. Funerals

Priests or Deacons can lead funeral services at the graveside or crematorium, and Priests will privately offer Mass for the deceased. The numbers attending the crematorium are limited. Your undertaker will advise you about the restrictions in effect in your area at the time of the burial or cremation.

After the current restrictions are lifted, parishes will offer public opportunities for prayer for all those buried or cremated during this time.

10. First Confessions

First Confessions are postponed until after the current crisis. Local parishes, in consultation with schools, will decide how and when to reschedule them.

11. First Holy Communion

First Holy Communion are postponed until after the current crisis. Local parishes, in consultation with schools, will decide how and when to reschedule them.

12. Confirmations

Confirmations are postponed until after the current crisis. In due course the Archbishop will issue advice about rescheduling.