



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#44 UPDATE: GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Information Updated: 16 August 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 Monday 9 August 2021, the following measures will apply across Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria until 11:59pm Thursday 2 September, or until otherwise advised. Additional changes have been announced for Metropolitan Melbourne as of 11:59pm Monday 16 August, 2021.

Regional Victoria comprises those areas outside the 31 designated local government areas (LGAs) of Metropolitan Melbourne: *Banyule, Hume, Moreland, Bayside, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Boroondara, Knox, Nillumbik, Brimbank, Manningham, Port Phillip, Cardinia, Maribyrnong, Stonnington, Casey, Maroondah, Whitehorse, Darebin, Melbourne, Whittlesea, Frankston, Melton, Wyndham, Glen Eira, Monash, Yarra, Greater Dandenong, Moonee Valley, Yarra Ranges and Hobsons Bay.*

To check your region please visit: <https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils>

	Regional Victoria	Metropolitan Melbourne
Curfew		As of 11:59pm Monday 16 August, a Curfew will be in place from 9pm to 5am, whereby a person is not permitted to leave their home except for limited reasons.
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.	<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.• Exception for food and drink limited so that face coverings can only be removed to eat and to drink non-alcoholic beverages (in reference to hotels and bars).
Religious Gatherings and Ceremonies	Indoor patron cap of 100 people and outdoor patron cap of 300 people per venue (excluding those required to conduct religious ceremonies)	No in-person gatherings permitted.

	<p>Density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies indoors and outdoors.</p> <p>A COVID Check-In Marshal must be present.</p> <p>A venue smaller than 100sqm can have up to 25 people per venue before density quotient applies.</p>	<p>Broadcast permitted for up to 5 people. These must be the same 5 people each time.</p>
Funerals	<p>Indoors and Outdoors: Permitted with a maximum of 50 people (plus those necessary to conduct the funeral).</p> <p>Children under 12 months old are not counted towards this cap.</p>	<p>Indoors and Outdoors: Permitted with no more than 10 people (and those necessary to conduct the funeral).</p> <p>Children under 12 months old are not counted towards this cap.</p>
Weddings	<p>Indoors and Outdoors: Permitted with a maximum of 50 people (excluding those required to conduct the wedding, i.e., authorised celebrant)</p>	<p>Indoors and Outdoors: Not permitted unless end-of-life or for deportation reasons.</p> <p>Involves only 5 persons (including the two persons being married, celebrant, two witnesses).</p>
Leaving Home	<p>Can leave home for any reason.</p> <p>Travel: Cannot travel to Metropolitan Melbourne except for a permitted reason (Must follow Metropolitan Melbourne restrictions when in Metro Melbourne);</p> <p>Travel permitted in Regional Victoria with no limit on the distance you can travel.</p>	<p>There will be 5 reasons to leave home: (NOTE CURFEW INFORMATION ABOVE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shopping for necessary goods and services (one person per household, once per day, a support person can accompany if required; within 5km); - Caregiving or compassionate reasons; - Authorised work or permitted education, or work interstate (if you can work from home, you must work from home); - Exercise (up to two hours, with one other person plus dependents if they cannot be left unsupervised; within 5km); - Receive a vaccination.

Private Gatherings in the home	Private gatherings are not permitted except for partner and single person bubbles.	Private gatherings are not permitted except for partner and single person bubbles.
Public Gatherings (park, beach etc)	Permitted for up to 10 people .	Not permitted.
Care Facility Visitors	For permitted purposes only. (Refer Govt Guidelines)	For permitted purposes only. (refer Govt Guidelines)
Hospital Visitors	For permitted purposes only. (refer Govt Guidelines)	For permitted purposes only. (refer Govt Guidelines)
Work	If you can work from home, you should work from home. Office work permitted up to 25 per cent or a limit of 10 people, whichever is greater.	If you can work from home, you must work from home. Authorised workers are permitted to travel to and from work even when curfew is in place. A permit is required when leaving the home for authorised work.
QR Contact tracing	15-min threshold removed. All venue attendees must register.	

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.

Where applicable, the following Liturgical Guidelines will apply noting the difference in allowances between Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria

Places of Worship and Religious Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Metropolitan Melbourne, no in-person gatherings are permitted. Broadcast permitted for up to 5 people (must be the same 5 people). • In Regional Victoria, Indoor patron cap of 100 people and outdoor patron cap of 300 people per venue (excluding those required to conduct religious ceremonies). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies indoors and outdoors. - A COVID Check-In Marshal must be present.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. • Face coverings must be worn indoors and outdoors unless an exception applies. • Hygiene precautions must be maintained at all times. • In Regional Victoria, 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. • Where permitted, 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).
<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 mean time we will follow these guidelines with diligence, using common sense and respect for others.</p> <p>FACE COVERINGS and SANITISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria - all people 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, except if at home or if an exception applies. • Where worship is permitted, 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. <p>SINGING (see reference further below)</p>

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In Regional Victoria and Metropolitan Melbourne:

- All participants must wear a face covering when indoors at all times (except if at home) and 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.

Receiving Our Lord in the areas where we may now gather 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.

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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each communicant comes forward to a place approximately 1.5 metres away from the minister and removes one side of their mask 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. - 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.
<p>Singing</p>	<p>Singing is permitted under certain conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Regional Victoria, and where permitted in Metropolitan Melbourne, (funerals, weddings, live broadcast), face coverings must be worn by the congregation when singing indoors at all times. 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.
<p>Private Worship</p>	<p>Places of worship may be open for private worship in Regional Victoria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Regional Victoria 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 and density quotients for Regional Victoria 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>The 15-minute threshold has been removed and all venue attendees must register. Venue number caps must be adhered to depending on region.</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 and outdoor space, indicating maximum capacity, COVIDSafe hygiene and physical distancing requirements.</p>
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>In Regional Victoria (Indoors and Outdoors) weddings are permitted with a maximum of 50 people (excluding those required to conduct the wedding, i.e., authorised celebrant)</p> <p>In Metropolitan Melbourne (Indoors and Outdoors) weddings are not permitted unless end of life or for deportation reasons. Involves only 5 persons (including the two persons being married, celebrant, two witnesses).</p> <p>Where permitted:</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. • Hygiene precautions must be maintained throughout. • 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.
Funerals	<p>In Regional Victoria (Indoors and Outdoors) funerals are permitted with a maximum of 50 people (plus those necessary to conduct the funeral). Children under 12 months old are not counted towards this cap.</p> <p>In Metropolitan Melbourne (Indoors and Outdoors) funerals are permitted with no more than 10 people (and those necessary to conduct the funeral). Children under 12 months old are not counted towards this cap.</p> <p>Where permitted:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings must be worn by all participants including those conducting the funeral and any technicians or musicians. • 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.
Baptisms	<p>Baptisms may be celebrated in Regional Victoria under the latest indoor and outdoor Religious Gatherings and Ceremonies limits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants must wear a face covering when indoors at all times, unless under 12 years of age or have a lawful reason not to. Even with a face covering, participants should keep at least 1.5 metres distance between themselves and others (unless they are people that live with each other). • 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.
Penance	<p>In Regional Victoria, 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. • 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.
Confirmations	<p>Confirmations may be celebrated in Regional Victoria in line with all applicable density, distancing, and hygiene regulations.</p> <p>- 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.</p> <p>- 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</p>

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 swab.
- 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.

	<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	In both Regional Victoria and Metropolitan Melbourne , technicians are included in the number limits and must adhere to density quotients and distancing. Face coverings must be worn indoors.
Gathering on Church Sites	<p>For Regional Victoria:</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Regional Victoria the density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm for the space applies if a COVID CHECK-IN MARSHALL is used, otherwise the density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm must be applied with a maximum cap of 100 people per space. • Mandatory QR Code record keeping must be in place. • Masks must be worn indoors at all times.

	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.
Public Gatherings in Public Spaces	In Regional Victoria up to 10 people are permitted from across multiple households, friends and/or family, outdoors. Infants under 12 months not included in the cap. In Metropolitan Melbourne no public gatherings are permitted. A public place means an area that everyone can access, for example a local park or the beach. Face coverings must be worn outdoors.
Home Visits	In Regional Victoria and Metropolitan Melbourne , private gatherings are not permitted except for partner and single person bubbles.
Hospitals or Care Facilities	For permitted purposes only, which includes to provide care and support for a resident’s or patient’s physical and emotional wellbeing – and to provide end of life support. In both Regional Victoria and Metropolitan Melbourne No more than two visitors per day unless visit is for end-of-life reasons. For end-of-life visits, two visitors are permitted at a time with no maximum daily limit. A group may exceed the “two visitors at a time” rule if dependents of a visitor are in the group and care for the dependents cannot be arranged. (Refer Govt Guidelines)
Ministering to COVID-19 Patients	Health officials will be able to guide what is possible and permissible.