



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#56 UPDATE: GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Information Updated: 24 February 2022, 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.

These guidelines are in accordance with Victorian pandemic orders which have been extended from 11:59pm Wednesday 12 January for three months. The declaration was made under section 165AE of the *Public Health and Well Being Act 2008*.

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. We also look forward to the time when all people can join together in various locations, and for the many activities that truly unite us fully as communities.

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.

VICTORIA	
Face Coverings	<p>From 11:59pm Friday 25 February 2022, face coverings are not mandatory within Places of Worship or workplaces and will only be required in the following circumstances listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People on public transport, in taxis and rideshare, on planes, and indoors at an airport• People working in or visiting hospitals, and indoor areas at care facilities• Workers in hospitality, retail and the court system• Workers at justice and correctional facilities• Students in Year 3 or above at primary schools, and workers at early childhood centres and primary schools (face coverings can be removed in secondary schools)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People working indoors at an event with more than 30,000 people attending • In special circumstances, such as if you have COVID-19 or are a close contact and you're leaving home • Face coverings are recommended for other workers serving or facing members of the public, such as if you are at reception, meeting guests or serving customers. <p>Please note, health officials have emphasised that face coverings are recommended for workers who “serve or face” members of the public. As always, our priority is care for others and especially those most vulnerable. In our circumstances, there are particular times when Clergy, ministerial leaders and parish staff and volunteers are in close contact with a broad range of our people, many of whom are still feeling anxious or who experience other health challenges which makes them vulnerable. We ask you to keep this in mind at all times and use face coverings in those situations as appropriate.</p> <p>It is still recommended to wear a face covering outside if you cannot physically distance, if you have any symptoms, or if you are with people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19.</p>
<p>QR Code Check in requirements</p>	<p>As of 6:00pm Friday 18 February 2022, QR code check-in to Places of Worship and Parish Offices is no longer required. We understand this to also include when the faithful are using other facilities within the Parish (for example, hospitality to visitors following Mass or the celebration of a Baptism, Children’s liturgy etc).</p> <p>However, for facilities in the parish community such as Parish Offices or Halls hired out to other non-Church community groups, vaccination status may still be required and should be managed through the COVIDsafe plan they provide to run their event or booking.</p> <p>Please also note below in regard to vaccination requirements for staff and volunteers.</p>
<p>Numbers/Density</p>	<p>There are no limits on participants or density requirements at Places of Worship for Weddings, Funerals, and general Worship – including opening for private prayer.</p> <p>Whilst we warmly welcome our full opening, please also note that you can reduce risks by maintaining 1.5 metre distance from others where possible and providing sanitiser at key locations (including the approach for reception of Communion).</p>

<p>Vaccinations</p>	<p>There will not be any vaccination requirements nor any requirement for organisers to check vaccination status for attendees at Places of Worship for Weddings, Funerals, or general Worship.</p> <p>Workers at Places of Worship (staff and volunteers) must still be up-to-date with their vaccinations and are required to show evidence of their vaccination status to their employer in order to continue working outside their home. This includes members of a choir or servers over the age of 18 years as they are regarded as volunteers.</p> <p>Please note that attendees to other Church-related activities outside of worship which involve the worshipping community (gatherings after Mass or following Funerals, Baptisms; Children’s liturgy; youth groups; prayer groups, etc.) do not require full vaccination status. However, staff and volunteers at such gatherings do (as per above).</p> <p>Vaccination requirements also do not apply in limited circumstances such as a facility that hosts essential public support groups or support services, or under guidelines from particular sporting bodies. Information regarding exemptions or rulings should be provided to the Parish in the COVIDsafe plan of the organisation or group hiring the premises.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Vaccination requirements will apply from the age of 18 years for those attending parish halls and facilities, and 12 years and two months for workers, unless a medical exemption applies.</p>
<p>Maximise Ventilation</p>	<p>It is recommended that windows and outside doors be opened, where possible, to maximise ventilation and to improve indoor air quality. Reduce or eliminate recirculated air and increase the use of outdoor air where possible.</p>
<p>COVIDsafe Plan</p>	<p>All workplaces and Places of Worship must still have a COVIDSafe Plan that supports a community to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and should be regularly reviewed to ensure it is current. Signage in public spaces reminding attendees about sanitising.</p> <p>The current changes provide a good opportunity to review what is in place. For guidance please visit: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-plan</p>
<p>Cleaning of Facilities</p>	<p>Places of Worship will not need to be deep cleaned between uses, but good hygiene standards should be maintained according to a Parish COVIDsafe plan. This includes the continued availability of sanitiser throughout the venue.</p>

Care Facility Visitors	Please work with the care provider in determining what is required and permitted.
Hospital Visitors	
Work	As of 11:59pm Friday 25 February 2022, public health recommendations for Victorians to work and study from home will be removed.