



Vicar General

Ref 2022.14

Tuesday, 1 March 2022

**Directives for Churches and Chapels within the
Catholic Archdiocese of Perth
COVID-19, Level 2 Public Health and Social Measures for Western Australia**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

From **12:01am, Thursday, 3 March 2022**, Level 2 COVID-19 Public Health and Social Measures will be introduced state-wide. The WA Government's full announcement outlining all Level 2 measures can be accessed [here](#).

Further updates relevant to the Archdiocese of Perth will be communicated on an ongoing basis via the [Archdiocese of Perth website](#).

As community transmission of COVID-19 increases in our community, it is incumbent on all of us to exercise responsibility to ensure that every effort is made to reduce community transmission, demonstrate diligent citizenship as well as demonstrate Christian concern and charity.

The Archdiocese of Perth continues to support, and comply with, government directives and associated public health advice. The Western Australian government continues to issue ongoing public health advice in relation to COVID-19. The Archdiocese of Perth continues to be guided by this advice through our ongoing commitment to monitoring any threat posed by COVID-19 to Catholic communities across our Archdiocese.

I write to share and reaffirm the revised series of directives which came into effect across the Archdiocese of Perth on **Thursday, 3 March 2022**. The website of the Archdiocese of Perth has a dedicated COVID-19 web page on which all statements from the Archdiocese of Perth can be found. You can access this page at: <http://perthcatholic.org.au/COVID19.htm>

The following directives apply to the clergy, religious and the lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Perth:

- Places of worship are permitted to open providing that the **two (2) sqm square metre rule** and **150-person** (excluding the people required to conduct the service) **capacity limit is applied**. This also applies to indoors or outdoors for **weddings** and **funerals**.
- Home gatherings are limited to ten (10) people.
- Additionally, to remain open during Level 2 Measures places of worship need to observe the following:
 - mask wearing is required for all adults and children in Years 3 or above in all indoor public settings.
 - **NB:** During the Mass a Priest, Lector and Cantor/Choir members etc., may remove their mask when required to communicate, however reapplying the mask is required when not communicating to the congregation as a whole (i.e. when the readings are being undertaken or during Communion for example) is required.
 - physical distancing is to be observed between people of different households.



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- places of worship are to maintain public hygiene and frequent cleaning.
- **COVID Safety Plans:** Places of worship must ensure that their COVID Safety Plan is available for inspection by authorised officers.
 - If your parish has multiple churches/premises, you must prepare a COVID Safety Plan for each church/premise.
 - Each place of worship must display a COVID Safety Plan certificate at an entry point to the place of worship
- **Contact Registers:** Places of worship are required to have and maintain a SafeWA Contact Register (QR Code and Manual contact register) which must be visible to parishioners and visitors.
- **Seating at Places of Worship:** maintain a minimum of **two (2) square metres** per person and not exceed the **150-people capacity limit**.
- Physical distancing of **one (1) person per two (2) square metres** must be observed inside each place of worship. Available seating must be clearly marked with signage to assist in maintaining physical distancing.
- Hand sanitizers are to be available at each entrance of a place of worship.
- Clear guidelines must be put in place to direct people on how to enter and exit the place of worship to ensure that this is done systematically.
- Holy Water fonts/stoups in places of worship are to remain empty.
- Pews, seats, seatbacks, top rails, kneelers, doors, doorknobs, microphones, sacristies, toilets/bathrooms and all other communal areas are to be cleaned, wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- Parish newsletters or bulletins should not be re-used. Sufficient copies should be made to ensure that people get copies, but then they must either take them home or dispose of them.
- Hymnals or shared copies of texts are not to be used.
- Persons who feel unwell, who have flu/respiratory symptoms, elevated body temperatures or who have been in contact in the previous fourteen (14) days with persons suspected to have, or who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are not permitted to enter places of worship.
- **St Mary's Cathedral, Perth:** please refer to the St Mary's Cathedral website and social media pages for updates relevant to the Cathedral: <https://stmaryscathedralperth.com.au/>

Celebration of the Sacraments of the Church

- Preparations for, and the celebration of, First Reconciliation (school-aged children) and First Holy Communion (school-aged children) may continue. **Physical distancing of one (1) person per two (2) square metres** must be observed inside the church or chapel. Available seating must be clearly marked with signage to assist in maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres between people of other households. A **150-person** (excluding the people required to conduct the service) **capacity limit also applies**.
- The preparation of school-aged children for the Sacrament of Confirmation can continue.



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- Individual parishes may choose to celebrate the Rite of Initiation with RCIA Elect and candidates.
- There should be **two (2) square metres** of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing with persons of other households.

Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA)

- Individual parishes may choose to celebrate the Rite of Initiation with RCIA Elect and candidates.
- Please contact Dr Carmel Suart, Director of the Office of Christian Initiation, on either 08 6104 3696 or christian.initiation@perthcatholic.org.au for any queries in relation to RCIA.

Baptism

- The number of people that can attend a Baptism will be determined by the maximum capacity of each place of worship, based on **two (2) square metres** of floor space per person and may not exceed the **maximum capacity of 150-people**.
- Fresh baptismal water must be used for each candidate.
- Full immersion baptism is prohibited unless the water in the baptismal pool is drained between candidates. The baptismal pool must subsequently be cleaned and disinfected after each full immersion.
- For the anointing with Chrism and the Oil of Catechumens at baptism, the celebrant should use cotton balls with a separate one for each candidate. These cotton balls must be disposed of appropriately after the celebration.
- There should be **two (2) square metres** of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing with persons of other households.

Confessions

- Priests can provide opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, according to the First Rite.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is to occur in a well-ventilated space and with appropriate social distancing being maintained at all times, including the absolution. The Sacrament can be celebrated in the sanctuary but provision for anonymity should be made.
- There should be **two (2) square metres** of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing with persons of other households.

Masses

In light of the **two (2) square metre** rule under Level 2 Public Health and Social Measures, it may be necessary for Parish Priests to implement revised weekday and weekend Mass timetables. Parishes are to put in place procedures to ensure that numbers of attendees at all Masses conform to the directives of the Western Australian Government. The faithful continue to be dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Parishes are encouraged to continue live streaming Masses.

- Allocated seating for each member of the congregation is to be clearly indicated through the use of signage.
- In view of the now long-standing practice of receiving Holy Communion in the hand, all Catholics receiving Holy Communion at Masses celebrated in the Ordinary Form of



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the Roman Rite are very strongly encouraged, out of concern for the health of others including the celebrant and other ministers, to refrain from receiving Holy Communion on the tongue.

- Offertory gifts are to be in closed vessels or, where this is not possible, vessels should be appropriately covered.
- Offertory processions and Gospel processions are to be omitted.
- The Sign of Peace is to be given without physical contact.
- Collections are not to be taken up during the Mass. Churches and chapels can install boxes or containers for offerings at the entrance to the church or wherever they decide to be appropriate.
- The Precious Blood is not to be shared from the chalice at any Masses and is reserved to the celebrant(s) only. The celebrant and concelebrants are to receive from the chalice by intinction.
- All Priests, Acolytes and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to wash their hands in soap and water, or are to use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser both immediately before and immediately after the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Physical distancing between people of separate households in the Communion Procession is to be observed. Places of worship may wish to dedicate ushers to facilitate the movement of people at the time Communion is distributed.
- Pews, seats, seatbacks, top rail and kneelers are to be wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- The pulpit, lectern, credence table, ministers' seats and anything handled by multiple people is to be wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- Church ushers may need to remind parishioners and the faithful to maintain social distancing whether they are entering or exiting a church or chapel for Mass or in the Communion Procession.
- There should be **two (2) square metres** of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing with persons of other households.
- Delegation for the individual celebration of Confirmation is to be requested from the Office of the Vicar General.

Weddings

- Places of worship are permitted to celebrate weddings.
- There must be **two (2) square metres** of floor space per person with each person practicing **physical distancing**. **A capacity limit of 150-people (excluding the people required to conduct the service) applies.**

Funerals

- Places of worship are permitted to celebrate funerals.
- There should be **two (2) square metres** of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing. **A capacity limit of 150-people (excluding the people required to conduct the service) also applies.**



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The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick *(for individuals)*

- Priests will continue to respond to requests to anoint people and will continue to celebrate the sacrament on an individual basis.
- Upon request a priest must provide a COVID-19 Digital Proof of Vaccination Certificate within nursing homes, aged-care facilities and hospitals.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

- The communal celebration of the Anointing of the Sick is to be temporarily suspended.

Resources

A variety of resources continue to be offered by the Archdiocese of Perth on the dedicated COVID-19 webpage and through the Centre for Liturgy and Centre for Faith Enrichment websites:

Archdiocese of Perth Centre for Faith Enrichment website

- <https://cfe.org.au/>

Daily Mass Livestream

- [Mass on Demand – CathNews](#)
- [Mass for You at Home \(Channel 10 -- aired 6am each Sunday\)](#)
- [Mass on Demand – Archdiocese of Brisbane](#)
- [Daily Mass -- Archdiocese of Melbourne](#)
- [Daily Mass -- Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn](#)

Mass Readings and Liturgical Resources

- [Readings of the Day](#)
- [Prayers for Time of Pandemic](#)

Prayers and Scripture

- Act of Spiritual Communion – Diocese of Bathurst
- [Prayer from Apostolic Nuncio in Australia, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana](#)

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- [COVID-19 Information for Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)

I assure you of my continued prayers and gratitude as together we as an archdiocese seek to continue to witness and proclaim our Christ-centred hope within a global context that is collectively seeking to respond to the uncertainty and reality of COVID-19.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Very Rev Peter Whitely
VICAR GENERAL