Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide

Archbishop of Adelaide

13th November, 2020
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Dear sisters and brothers,

Re: Current Guidelines in relation to Places of Worship

Grace and peace, I hope that this note finds you well.

While we had hoped and wished it was otherwise, present indications are that current guidelines in relation to Places of Worship will remain much the same as Christmas approaches. It is important to note that we are still operating under a Declared State of Emergency.

Density Requirements
The current requirements are that we must allow 1 person per 2 sqm. An indication has been given by SA Health that it is unlikely this baseline requirement will change for some time. Please ensure you are adhering to this ruling or contact Deb Nation and her team at Catholic Health Safety and Welfare on 08 8215 6850 for assistance on how best to configure your church.

Guidelines and suggestions
The following are reminders:-

1. Parishes must take reasonable steps to maintain 1.5m physical distancing
2. You must maintain good hygiene: hand sanitisation and regular cleaning of surfaces
3. Please discourage people from congregating at entry/exits and outside
4. Continue with contact tracing as it is still required at all Masses and gatherings
5. You must have a COVID Safe Plan
6. You may wish to consider designating a section for families in your church to assist with space allocation. Family members can sit together but also must be 1.5m from others.

Congregational Singing
The Government advice on congregational singing is that it should be avoided. Choirs should be spaced **more than** 1.5 metres apart. Singing increases the distance that droplets from the mouth can spread.

The advice from the South Australian Government can be found here:

https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/__files/f/38857/20200729+-+COVID-19+Factsheet+-+Religious_Faith+communities+Guidance.pdf

This advice also applies to carol services.

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Mass Times and Crowd Management
It is reasonable to assume that there are people who attend Christmas Masses that might not be aware of current restrictions for Places of Worship.

A general suggestion is to have your Christmas Mass information (including requirements for booking) on the home page of your website, so when people search this information it is the first information that appears.

Outdoor Masses
Outdoor masses have the same density requirements i.e. 1 person per 2 sqm.

If you are planning an outdoor mass and you anticipate more than 1,000 people please contact Deb Nation as a separate COVID Management Plan will need to be developed.

Shortly you will receive a message from Leanne Heffernan, Archbishop Office Manager, about times for your Masses, so these can be advertised in *The Southern Cross*, on the Find a Mass App and on the Archdiocesan website.

COVID Marshals and Support Session
COVID marshals will be required for all Masses in your Parish. It will also be important to roster on additional COVID marshals for your Christmas Masses to ensure good crowd management.

To support COVID marshals the following training has been planned:-

COVID Marshall and Support Session

Friday 11th December, 3:00pm

Centacare Office, 45 Wakefield St, ADELAIDE, Mary Fennescey Room

The training will provide extra support for COVID marshals to support Christmas Masses.

Could your **RSVP by close of business Monday 7th December 2020,** to dnation@cshwsa.org.au

https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=681147&bof=1

This will also be recorded and will be available for viewing after the session.

The requirements for Christmas Masses will be promoted widely by the Communications Office, including in the December edition of *The Southern Cross* which will appear in The Advertiser on Saturday December 12. Information will also be provided to radio and TV in the lead up to Christmas.

Online Presence
The Cathedral and some Parishes are still streaming Masses online, and this will ensure those who can't be physically present can at least be participating from home. We would strongly encourage this for anyone who is unwell.

For your information the Cathedral midnight Mass will be recorded and aired on Channel 44 at 11am on Christmas Day.

Guidelines for Celebrating Mass and Distribution of Holy Communion

It is important that all clergy continue to strictly adhere to hand sanitisation requirements and be seen publicly to be doing this.

The priest must use hand sanitiser before Mass commences, prior to the distribution of Holy Communion, after the distribution of Holy Communion, and any other time during Mass after his hands have come into contact with a solid surface

If clergy are unwell they should not be celebrating Mass. This also applies to those assisting.

The procession of the gifts should still be omitted.

The sign of peace must be offered by avoiding any physical exchange.

Communicants may only receive Holy Communion via the hand and not directly onto the tongue. Holy Communion from the cup is strictly prohibited.

Earlier Mass time consideration

You may consider if appropriate that permission be presumably deemed for earlier Masses only on Christmas Eve 2020.

I appreciate the challenging nature of this time as we approach a significant liturgical season in the church. We will continue to monitor the situation and will advise parishes if changes occur.

In Domino,

+ Pat O'Regan

+Patrick O'Regan
Archbishop of Adelaide