



Directions for the Archdiocese of Sydney from 18 March 2020 until further notice

With respect to the Celebration of Mass and other Liturgies

Many people are already self-selecting to stay at home and attendance at many Masses will predictably be under 100. But for the sake of caution during this time of pandemic and on the advice of the Bishops Conference, the following directions will be observed in the Archdiocese of Sydney:

- no indoor Mass or Church event should be conducted with more than 100 attendees; no outdoor event for more than 500 people
- if more than 100 attendees might be expected for an indoor Mass or other Church event, it should be cancelled, postponed, ticketed, moved outside or split over two or more time-slots or venues (linked by live-stream and provision of Holy Communion)
- priests are thus granted permission to celebrate multiple Sunday Masses as necessary
- holy water should be removed from all stoups but still to be available for taking home
- alcohol-based gels (or the like) should be available near church entrances, confessionals, baptisteries and in the sanctuary
- attendees should be encouraged to spread out around the church ('physical distancing')
- all ministers of Holy Communion should disinfect their hands before and after distributing
- in the Ordinary Form of the Latin Rite, the Body of Christ should only be administered in the hand and the Chalice should only be received by the celebrant, with any concelebrants intincting from a second chalice
- the Sign of Peace should be omitted or limited to saying 'Peace be with you' with a nod or bow; no hand-shaking or hand-holding should occur here or at the Our Father
- hymn books should not be used
- collection plates should not be passed from person to person; baskets on long handles, leaving collection bowls or electronic 'tap and go' terminals may be used and direct debit encouraged

Apart from Mass...

Whether or not public Masses continue to be celebrated the following directives are also issued:

- as far as possible, churches should remain open to allow private prayer; the Blessed Sacrament might be exposed in the monstrance for this purpose (as long as fewer than 100 are attending and with the usual provisions for reverence and security of the Sacrament)

- on some days when this is liturgically permitted (see Ordo pp. 10-11), priests should offer the Mass for the Sick, the Mass for Any Need or a votive Mass such as that of Our Lady of Lourdes
- prayers of intercession for an end to the pandemic and for the safety of all should be included in Masses, in the Divine Office, and in private prayers; houses of consecrated religious are asked to redouble their intercessory prayers also
- Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals may be celebrated, if necessary restricted to immediate family; baptisms and weddings can, of course, be postponed
- preparation for and celebration of First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation for children should be postponed until the pandemic is over
- all ministers should follow precautions recommended by health authorities when visiting people's homes, aged care facilities, hospitals, prisons and detention centres
- when Anointing the Sick, priests are given permission to lay on hands by holding them above rather than upon the head and to anoint using a cotton wool ball or bud or a protective glove which can be disposed of appropriately after a single use; anointing the head would be sufficient
- priests will abide by all civil restrictions while seeking to be as pastorally available and creative as possible in the circumstances; they should ensure that parishioners can contact them in emergencies.

If the Public Celebration of Mass is eventually suspended

If the public celebration of the Mass is eventually suspended, the following additional directions will be observed in the Archdiocese of Sydney:

- all but priests are dispensed from attending Sunday Mass: the faithful can keep holy their Sunday by setting aside some time for prayer at home, reading the Scriptures of the day, watching Mass on television or online, and asking God for the graces they would normally receive in Holy Communion
- priests should celebrate daily Mass privately and offer it on behalf of those who cannot attend and for the whole nation
- churches should as far as possible remain open for private prayer
- the Second and Third Rites of Reconciliation should not be used; First Rite Confessions should only be heard through a grill covered with a protective cloth
- priests should consider continuing to publish their weekly parish bulletin on-line with advice and a weekly homily/reflection
- Sunday Mass and Holy Week services will be celebrated privately at the cathedral and be live-streamed or available on demand at at <https://www.stmaryscathedral.org.au/>

Further instructions will be issued by the Liturgy Office regarding Baptisms of several children, the RCIA and the various rites of the Triduum (if these go ahead).

These directives will be reviewed as required.



(Most Rev.) Anthony Fisher OP

Archbishop of Sydney