CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

#59 UPDATE: GENERAL LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

COVID-19 Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Information Updated: 23 June 2022, 12.00pm

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 Tuesday 12 April 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.

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.

As of 11.59pm Friday 24 June 2022

	VICTORIA
Face Coverings	Face coverings remain optional within Places of Worship, workplaces, primary schools, early childhood or retail settings. Face coverings are still required in sensitive settings such as hospitals and care facilities, and must still be worn on public transport, taxis, ride shares, and planes – but will no longer be required at airports.
Vaccinations	There are no longer vaccination requirements at Places of Worship nor any requirement for organisers to check vaccination status for attendee, workers or volunteers at Places of Worship and for associated parish activities. **While mandatory vaccinations are still required in some settings (including residential aged care and disability, healthcare, and custodial and emergency services), for the Archdiocese, including our parishes, the Victorian**

	Government rule requiring people to work from home unless they are double-vaccinated is lifted. **All staff and volunteers can return to Archdiocesan offices and parish offices to work, without restriction, from 11.59pm Friday 24 June 2022. It should be noted that the Archdiocese and each parish must continue to have an up-to-date COVIDSafe Plan.**
Liturgical considerations	Holy Communion may be distributed to the faithful under both species (i.e., the Sacred Host and Precious Blood). Sanitising hands before distribution of Holy Communion is still recommended. Where there is physical touch as part of a Rite of the Church (for example, baptisms, confirmation and anointing of the sick or dying) the use of cotton buds is no longer mandated, but hands should be sanitised well before and after the Rite. Holy Water stoups may be filled, but care should be seen that the water is changed regularly (at a minimum of once a week). The use of hymn books and other worship aids are permitted as part of the liturgy, and Collection Plates may be returned.
COVIDSafe Plan	All workplaces and Places of Worship are still required to have a COVIDSafe Plan that supports a community to reduce the spread of the virus. https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-plan
Care Facility and Hospital Visitors	Please work with the care provider in determining what is required and permitted. Visitor caps to care facilities, including residential aged care and disability are removed, with residents able to see any number of people as long as visitors test negative on a rapid antigen test that day. If a test is unavailable, a person can only be present for limited reasons such as end-of-life visits.
COVID-19 Diagnosis	It is an essential requirement to isolate for seven days following a COVID-19 diagnosis. Individuals must notify their workplace, in addition to informing their social contacts. Workplaces, however, are not required to individually identify and notify each potentially exposed worker/contact.