



Archbishop of Wellington

PO Box 1937, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

5 October 2021

Dear Fathers and Lay Pastoral Leaders

Greetings and all good wishes.

Two weeks ago I said I would update you today on our response to what is happening with the Covid19 situation. Yesterday the government announced some slight easing of restrictions in Auckland, and a small change to those areas of the country in Level 2.

I have given our response a lot of thought, have asked for advice and prayed about what is the right thing to do. As you know, the virus has spread outside Auckland in the last week, and there is concern about the number of daily cases in Auckland. I feel very responsible for the safety of the people in the Archdiocese and I cannot stress enough that we are all obliged to ensure our own safety and the safety of others.

I am also very aware that many people want to come back to Masses. I believe that we must remind people if they are concerned or cautious, if they are vulnerable and at risk because of age or underlying health conditions, they are dispensed from Sunday Mass.

As from this Thursday 7th October you may resume your normal weekday Masses from Monday to Saturday morning. Please do not introduce extra weekday Masses, although you may want to consider whether one Mass is an early evening Mass so workers can attend. The following precautions **must** be in place:

Spaces in the church marked for social distancing.

People counted into the church to ensure the capacity with social distancing is not exceeded.

Everyone must scan the QR code or sign in.

Plenty of hand sanitizer available.

Strongly encourage people to wear masks, as recommended by the Ministry of Health. I endorse that recommendation.

Communion under one kind only, the Body of the Lord, in the hand only, no exceptions.

No holy water in the foyer.

Contactless Sign of Peace

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No congregational singing.

You should take any other precautions you think are needed such as cleaning the pews.

It is not necessary for people to register to attend weekday Masses as parishes should be able to manage the numbers involved.

All being well next week, Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses will resume on the weekend of 16-17 October. We have set up a registration system which can be used by parishes, and which will allow people to see where there are available spaces. This will be helpful when people are wondering if they need to go very early to get a space, or whether there will be spaces. Those who have multiple Masses available in their parish or in surrounding parishes will be able to see where the spaces are.

We are seeking to clarify whether the lifting of the 100-person cap on hospitality venues in Level 2 will also apply to churches, as our people are also "seated and separate". If it does apply it will allow some churches to increase their capacity and we will be in touch with those parishes. I will be in touch again next week about Sunday Masses.

I want to encourage you as priests and ministers in the community to tell the people that you are vaccinated yourselves and encourage others to be vaccinated. Pope Francis has said getting a Covid Jab that is "*authorised by their respective authorities*" is an act of love. Helping others to do the same, Pope Francis has said is also an act of love - "*Love for oneself, love for our families and friends, and love for all people*".

With all good wishes and every blessing.

Yours sincerely in the Lord

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John A. Cardinal Dew'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'John' being particularly prominent.

John A Cardinal Dew

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