



Catholic Diocese of Sale

PO Box 1410
6 Witton Street
WARRAGUL 3820

Ph: 5622 6600

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4th August 2020

Dear Fathers, Deacons, Chancery and Parish Staff,

We are mindful of the personal and pastoral challenges the ever changing COVID pandemic is placing upon you and your people. As you will be aware some parishes are now in Stage Four and others commencing Stage Three with the wearing of masks now necessary for all us.

Those under Stage Four (*Local Government Areas of Cardinia and Casey*) will be mindful of restrictions to their movement within 5 kilometres, essential shopping, exercise of one hour per day, no personal visitors other than approved essential workers and the nightly curfew from 8pm.

Stage Three restrictions (*all other Local Government Areas in Diocese*) require us to 'stay at home' unless for work, medical appointments, compassionate care of others or essential shopping.

The following might be of assistance to you in clarifying our situation under the religious/worship:

Pastoral Visitation to the Sick and Dying: Home visitation only for grave pastoral reasons. All hygiene precautions must be followed. Viaticum and anointing of the sick following the protocols of the relevant hospital and aged-care facilities.

Celebration of Mass = Priest and only those required to celebrate the liturgy: Priest (mask as you enter and removed during liturgy); Lector (may lower mask for reading); four additional people in the case of live-streaming all must wear masks; sanitiser must be used and available; social distancing required; usual hygiene measures must be undertaken following each celebration. COVID tracing details must be kept for all those who assist.

Baptisms: Must be postponed unless there is an urgent and grave pastoral reason (Can. 857;860).

Weddings: Stage Four zones cancelled except for compassionate grounds; Stage Three limited to 5 people (the couple, the witnesses and the celebrant).

Confirmation: Cancelled throughout this six-week period and until further notice.

Funerals: Limited in both Stage Four and Three zones to ten people plus those required to conduct the funeral.

Please note that Church buildings, adoration chapels and other buildings used for public prayer and religious services are to be closed for public safety.

Masses in family homes or other domestic settings are not permitted in this period.

Those parishes which have pastoral responsibility for hospitals and aged-care facilities are encouraged to make contact directly with the appropriate management to assess expectations and requirements. Given the high risk to the aged and vulnerable many facilities have introduced a total lock-down to external visitors; however, it may be possible to speak with parishioners via the telephone to provide prayer and reassurance.

We appreciate the above restrictions will place particular demands upon the grieving and your ability to engage with people as you would prefer. We are all mindful of our shared efforts to which we have been called to aspire in the hope the measures introduced will significantly reduce the community spread of the virus.

Thank you for your constant witness to your people and one another.

May Our Lady of Perpetual Help, intercede for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Slater". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr Peter Slater
Diocesan Administrator