



BAYSIDE CATHOLIC MISSION

Dear friends,

As you are aware, the current lockdown restrictions have been slightly relaxed as of last Thursday evening. Unfortunately, the decisions around recommencing Masses come with certain complexities. Currently, the government regulations state that attendance at Masses and other religious services (not weddings or funerals) is limited to 20 fully vaccinated persons, or 10 whose vaccination status is not known. In other words, to allow 20 people in the church we are required to check their proof of vaccination at the door.

On Wednesday evening we had an ad hoc meeting of some of the Pastoral Council to discuss how we would approach and implement the regulations. It was strongly felt by us that the Church needs to be a place of inclusion and welcoming, not exclusion based on medical status. Christ came to save everybody, and welcomed everybody. We felt that it is not the role of the Church to segregate people at worship, or to be guards at the doors of our churches.

This leaves us with the option of 10 people being allowed at Mass (regardless of vaccination status and no proof will be required), and with the possibility that things will change very soon with higher vaccination rates. Accordingly, **we have decided that weekday Masses with a limit of 10 people will recommence from Monday 25th October (according to the normal timetable) and Sunday Mass will continue to be streamed without people.** All Covid-safe protocols will apply. We will review this situation in another week when things become clearer and there may be more certainty around the future directions and numbers. Our weekday Mass congregations are smaller than Sundays.

We realise that this may not be the option that would please some people, while others will see that the principle of inclusion and privacy must also be a consideration. If we decide who can enter a church based on certain criteria now, it does not augur well for what may happen in the future.

Public safety and the health of our worshippers is always an important priority and we will do everything we can to promote this in our churches. The reality is however that no environment can be guaranteed as safe- our supermarkets and shops are examples of this. With social distancing, sanitising and regular cleaning we hope to maintain our churches as safe places of worship where everybody is welcome.

So, to recap.....

- **From this coming Monday we will recommence our weekday Mass schedule, but not our Sunday schedule just yet.**
- **Bookings will be required for weekday Masses as numbers are strictly limited to 10 people and there are very significant penalties for non-compliance.**
- **To book for weekday Mass:**

**Phone the Bayside Mission office on
9593 1703 between 11am and 1pm on Friday 22nd October.**

To allow for as many people as possible to participate in Mass, we ask that you limit your booking/attendance to one Mass per week at this stage.

We thank the members of the Pastoral Council who assisted us with this decision, and we hope to have some more good news for you all very soon.

With an assurance of our continued prayers.

Fr David Cartwright

Fr Dean Mathieson