



Diocese of Armidale

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PARISH & SACRAMENTAL CORONAVIRUS GUIDELINES

24th March, 2020

CHURCH CLOSURES

The NSW Public Health (COVID-19 Places of Social Gathering) Order 2020 states (in part)

The Minister directs that the following **must not be open to members of the public** except as provided in this clause

(h) places of public worship, except for the purposes of conducting the following— (i) a wedding service at which there are no more than 5 persons (including the person conducting the service), (ii) a funeral service at which there are no more than 10 persons (including the person conducting the service)

SUNDAY & DAILY MASSES

All the faithful are dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass. All priests must continue to celebrate Mass every Sunday in the Parish church.

I also exhort and implore all priests to continue to celebrate daily Mass in the Parish Church with the doors closed, conscious that they are celebrating Mass for the people.

SUNDAY PRAYER IN HOMES

In the absence of attending Sunday Mass, families and individuals should undertake suitable prayer and reflection to keep the Lord's day holy. Options include:

- Reading and reflecting/discussing the Sunday readings and Gospel. These are available on the Diocesan website.
- Praying the Rosary
- Follow a Mass online
- Making a Spiritual Communion
- Praying other family prayers
- Creating and decorating a prayer space with a candle, crucifix, bible and holy images

ONLINE MASSES & RESOURCES

There are numerous online Masses and prayer resources. The Diocesan website has links to these.

WEDDINGS

There is to be a maximum attendance of no more than 5 people at any wedding: the bride and groom, 2 witnesses and the celebrant. Social distancing rules apply.

FUNERALS

Funerals are to be attended by a maximum of no more than 10 people. The usual social distancing rules apply.

BAPTISMS

Baptism may be postponed for at least six months unless there is danger of death. The guidelines of using an instrument (glove, cotton bud or cotton ball) for the anointings and of not touching the person are to be observed.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Individual anointing of the sick is to continue complying with the guidelines of using an instrument (glove, cotton bud or cotton ball) and holding hands above the head of the person.

CONFESSION

Only the 1st Rite of Reconciliation is to be celebrated.

Parish Priests should make every effort to maintain regular weekly times for Confession. It will be important to identify a suitable space within the church grounds (indoors or outdoors) where a penitent's privacy and anonymity can be respected.

Additionally, as in normal circumstances, priests will offer Confession to anyone who approaches them on an individual basis.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK

Pastoral care of the sick, frail, elderly and shut-ins should as far as possible be continued by the clergy. Priests are still available to minister to the sick and dying, at all times observing hospital and nursing home protocols and taking the appropriate precautions.

PARISH COLLECTIONS

The closure of our churches is going to have a drastic impact on the collections. Where possible priests and parish staff will raise with parishioners, who have not already done so, the possibility of setting up electronic transfer for both the 1st and 2nd collections.

CONFIRMATION

The Bishop's confirmation and visitation programme are suspended, and this will be reassessed later in the year.

1ST HOLY COMMUNION

All 1st Holy Communion Masses are suspended and this will be reassessed later in the year.

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The SRE programme for State schools in the Diocese has been suspended.


DIOCESAN WEBSITE

The Diocesan website is being updated with information as it comes to hand.

CHANCERY OFFICE

The Chancery Office is remaining open whilst ever this is possible.

Yours in Christ,


Most Rev Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Armidale