



Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide

Apostolic Administrator



March 19, 2020
20/112

A letter to the Catholic people of the dioceses of Adelaide and Port Pirie

My Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Prime Minister has announced that non-essential indoor gathers are to be limited to 100 people and outdoor events of more than 500 are prohibited.

Given the serious nature of the coronavirus, as a community we are to support these measures as responsible and sensible.

In consultation with the Consultors and Vicars General of the two dioceses, the following actions are directed:

- The temporary suspension of Masses and public liturgies until further notice;
- All other large gatherings are suspended. For further clarification please refer to the diocesan websites or contact your local parish office.

It is a grave decision to suspend Masses. We realise that some churches would have congregations of less than 100, but because of the seriousness of the situation which in all likelihood will become more acute, a clear and concise preventative step is necessary for the sake of the general health of the population.

The decisions being notified in this circular will all be reviewed in light of ongoing medical and government advice.

We are conscious of the difficulties this will create for people planning baptisms, weddings and funerals. These may continue as long as the gathering is restricted to immediate family and close friends, and don't exceed limits established by the Government.

The principal church in each parish will remain open and the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Adoration at times determined by the local parish priest.

The Catholics of the dioceses are hereby dispensed from their Sunday obligations until further notice.

We encourage prayer time and reading Scriptures in the home. Details of online and televised Mass services are available at www.adelaide.catholic.org.au and may help deepen devotion on the Lord's Day.

Priests should celebrate Mass daily by themselves, offering their prayers for the intention of the faithful and the healing of the present crisis.

Priests and deacons should also be available to visit individuals, especially those who are isolated, unwell and vulnerable. This includes administering Viaticum, the Anointing of the Sick and individual Reconciliation, while observing social distancing protocols.

All would be very conscious that these measures are being taken during the Season of Lent. We are going into something of a spiritual desert, and must support each other. The foregoing of the Eucharist is a severe deprivation for a Catholic. We understand that they will cause pain to many, and we put before ourselves at this time the sufferings of Jesus. We pray that appropriate medical solutions will be found for this pandemic and we pray for the peace of Christ among all Christians.

Preparation and celebration of First Confirmation, First Eucharist and First Rite of Reconciliation will be deferred until further notice.

At this stage, it appears that Holy Week services may need to be celebrated privately at the Cathedrals and we are investigating methods for participating in this online.

Again, we pray that the Christian community will act as a strength for all others, and that we will continue to give witness to the Gospel through works of mercy and charity.

The steps outlined above are similar to those undertaken by numbers of other major dioceses in the country. We are joined in a certain solidarity of renunciation.

Because of the introduction of the latest Government regulations, it is necessary to implement these decisions immediately.

Yours in Christ,



Bishop Gregory O'Kelly SJ
Apostolic Administrator
Bishop of Diocese of Port Pirie



Fr Philip Marshall
Administrator Delegate