

## Statement from The Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB on revised and temporary changes to be implemented within the Archdiocese of Perth in relation to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Ref No: 2020.2

Wednesday 18 March 2020

Dear Fathers, Deacons, sisters and brothers in the Lord.

Today, Wednesday 18 March 2020, the Prime Minister has expressly communicated a 'ban on non-essential gatherings of persons of one hundred or greater in indoor areas'. The government's existing ban on non-essential outdoor gatherings of five hundred persons or greater, which came into effect on Monday 16 March 2020, remains in effect. I commit the Archdiocese of Perth to the support of, and compliance with, both of these government directives and the associated and instructive public health advice.

The Western Australian and Federal Governments continue to issue ongoing public health advice in relation to COVID-19. The Archdiocese of Perth continues to be guided by this advice through our ongoing commitment to monitoring any threat posed by COVID-19 to Catholic communities across our Archdiocese.

I write to share with you a revised and expanded series of directives which come into effect today, **Wednesday 18 March 2020**. These directives are in addition to the previously issued directives to the Archdiocese of Perth of **Wednesday 4 March 2020** and **Monday 16 March 2020**. The website of the Archdiocese of Perth has a dedicated COVID-19 web page on which all statements from the Archdiocese of Perth can be found. You can access this information on the Archdiocesan website via the following link: [www.perthcatholic.org.au](http://www.perthcatholic.org.au)

The following directives apply to the clergy, religious and the lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Perth. These directives should be appropriately and immediately communicated verbatim within parishes, Catholic Education Western Australia, Archdiocesan ministries, and the broader Catholic community.

- **Temporary Suspension of the Public Celebration of the Mass**

All public Masses at all churches and chapels across the Archdiocese of Perth will be temporarily suspended from receipt of these directives on Wednesday 18 March 2020. This temporary suspension of public Masses within the Archdiocese of Perth is in place for an initial period of two weeks between **Wednesday 18 March 2020** and **Wednesday 1 April 2020**. Subsequent revisions and advice will be given prior to Wednesday 1 April 2020 in relation to this temporary suspension.

- **The Sunday Obligation** for the faithful does not apply during this time of emergency.

- **'Mass on Demand' (Online) and 'Mass for You at Home' (Television)**

- o **Online:** 'Mass on Demand', a daily service of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and CathNews can be accessed online

- at: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYRq7AjVimr-hcHFJD\\_HVaQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYRq7AjVimr-hcHFJD_HVaQ)

o **Free-to-air Television:** 'Mass for You at Home' is shown at 6.00am every Sunday morning on Channel 7.

o The online streaming of the celebration of the Mass from St Mary's Cathedral (Perth) and other churches within the Archdiocese of Perth is currently being developed and coordinated.

• The Bishops and Priests of Australia will continue to celebrate Mass in private for all the people entrusted to their care.

• **Accessibility to Churches and Chapels**

Parish Priests, Administrators and Rectors, in consultation with their communities of worship and the directives of public health advice, will put in place provisions for churches and chapels to remain open for private prayer, with the possibility of Eucharistic Adoration.

• **Celebration of the Sacraments of the Church**

The following temporary directives are to be observed in relation to the celebration of the Sacraments of the Church:

o **Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals** will continue until further directives are issued.

- I direct that each gathering must conform to the government-issued bans for indoor and outdoor public gatherings, and the relevant public health advice in relation to the practices of social distancing.
- The Metropolitan Cemeteries Board has determined that all funerals should be restricted to no more than 50 people at each gathering. These directives are outlined in a memo from the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board which has been placed on the Archdiocesan website.
- A number of funeral homes have provided advice to the Archdiocese of Perth that from Wednesday 18 March 2020 they will be limiting the size of gatherings at funerals to less than one hundred people. I advise you to specifically consult with relevant funeral homes directly when arranging funerals to ensure that you are aware of, and adhere to, their specific policies.

o **Reconciliation:** Priests will continue to provide opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, according to Rite I (individual confession and absolution).

o The celebration of **First Reconciliation (school-aged children and others)**, **First Holy Communion (school-aged children and others)** and **Confirmation (school-aged children and others)** will be temporarily suspended.

• I have today provided a letter to Parish Priests, Principals, Sacramental Coordinators and Catechists advising them of these temporary suspensions.

• A copy of this letter will be made available by both Catholic Education Western Australia and on the Archdiocese of Perth website: [www.perthcatholic.org.au](http://www.perthcatholic.org.au)

• **Prayer Resources for Individuals and Families**

The Archdiocese of Perth will be providing a series of prayer and worship resources for individuals and families to use within their homes for the period in which these directives are in effect. Web links to resources are available on the Archdiocese of Perth's Centre for Liturgy website: <http://liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au>

Additional links and suggestions for prayer resources will be regularly placed on the Archdiocese of Perth website in the COVID-19 section: [www.perthcatholic.org.au](http://www.perthcatholic.org.au)

### **Ministry of Communion to the Sick, Elderly and Housebound**

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) is placing limits on visits to vulnerable groups. Those who minister communion to the sick, elderly and housebound (Clergy, Acolytes and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion) are directed to review the AHPPC's latest updates and recommended measures to assist in protecting vulnerable people from COVID-19. The advice of the AHPPC can be found here: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-public-gatherings-and-visits-to-vulnerable-groups>

### **Chrism Mass and the Celebration of the Easter Triduum (Thursday 9 April – Sunday 12 April, 2020)**

In response to, and in support of the government's ban of indoor gatherings of one hundred persons or more, the celebration of both the Chrism Mass the Easter Triduum must be examined. Options for live-streaming the Chrism Mass and Easter Triduum on the internet are being considered and developed. Subsequent advice and directives will be issued in advance of the celebration of the Chrism Mass and the Easter Triduum.

### **Pastoral Letter to the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Perth from The Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB**

On Thursday 19 March I will issue a pastoral letter to the people of the Archdiocese of Perth. The daily development of public health advice, escalating global responses by civic and religious leaders, as well as the global impact on our sisters and brothers across the world continues to develop. The formal directives provided by Bishop Sproston and myself in recent weeks have sought to provide you with relevant and preventative strategies, as well as guidance intended to responsibly safeguard both community health and wellbeing. These formal directives are not intended as substitutes for the further pastoral care owed to the people of the Archdiocese of Perth. My forthcoming pastoral letter will seek to more fully respond to the wide spectrum of needs which exist for the people of the Archdiocese of Perth during these challenging times.

### **Public Health Advice**

Additional information and access to daily health alerts can be obtained from the Australian Government's Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

### **Launch of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Campaign**

The Australian Government's Department of Health has launched a national campaign to inform all Australians about the coronavirus (COVID-19). A national campaign has been launched to inform all Australians about the coronavirus (COVID-19). The campaign aims to reduce the risk to individuals and families by enabling them to make informed decisions and to take up health recommendations. The campaign resources can be found at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/launch-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-campaign>

### **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources**

The Australian Government's Department of Health provides a collection of resources for the general public, health professionals and industry regarding COVID-19, including translated resources. I would ask that you make your respective communities and ministries aware of the existence of these resources which can be found at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>

I assure you of my continued prayers and practical support as together we as an Archdiocese seek to continue to witness and proclaim our Christ-centred hope within a global context that is collectively seeking to respond to the uncertainty and reality of COVID-19.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

**Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB DD**  
**Archbishop of Perth**