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Hello Everyone,

We have all been conscious of the government restrictions regarding gatherings in our churches, which have been part of the community response to the coronavirus pandemic. We now have the very welcome news that some of these restrictions will be eased from midnight tonight.

In summary, the following will now be permitted in churches:

- Private prayer for up to 10 people (in addition to door attendant)
- Liturgies (such as Morning and Evening Prayer, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation) and other forms of prayer (such as the Rosary) with up to 10 attendees (in addition to celebrant, ministers, door attendant)
- Weddings with up to 10 attendees (in addition to bride, groom and celebrant)
- Funerals indoors with up to 20 attendees (in addition to celebrant and funeral staff)
- Funerals outdoors with up to 30 attendees (in addition to celebrant and funeral staff)

In all cases, the following requirements apply:

- Distancing of at least 1.5m between attendees
- Signage at the church door specifying the maximum number permitted at any time, allowing 4 square metres/person
- A register of attendees, including name, phone number, date & time of attendance
- A reasonable time between events to allow for cleaning between each service
- Cleaning by wiping with disinfectant:
 - Frequently touched surfaces (at least twice/day)
 - Whenever a surface is visibly soiled

I have attached relevant parts of the official regulations for your reference. The full document is available on the following website: www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/state-emergency

I am very mindful that the limit of 10 people in the congregation poses particular challenges for the celebration of Mass, especially on Sundays. I suggest that the parish priest or administrator consult parishioners about this. Where Mass with a limit of 10 seems impractical, the priest might judge that it would be better to continue simply with the present provisions for Mass online. Where Mass with the limit of 10 seems practical, the community would need to find a way to have no more than 10 people in the congregation. Such a celebration might also be live-streamed to those unable to attend in person.

When considering whether to have Masses with the limit of 10 people in the congregation, these are some points to note:

- The canonical limit that a priest celebrate no more than two Masses on weekdays and no more than three Masses on Sundays continues to be relevant.
- It may be helpful to ask parishioners to book in advance. This might be done through the parish office or by a web-based booking service like TryBooking, Eventbrite or Calendly.
- Ensuring the contact register, attendance limits and cleaning regime are fulfilled will require an attendant whenever churches are open; it would be helpful to advertise particular periods of time when the church will be open, with intervals between for cleaning.
- As not every parishioner will be able to be accommodated, it is important that we keep in contact in other ways with those who are not physically present.

As we begin to gather again in our churches, even though in limited ways, I pray for each one of you.

In this Easter season, may the peace of the risen Christ be with you.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul

Directions from Deputy Chief Health Officer (Communicable Disease) in accordance with emergency powers arising from declared state of emergency

Restricted Activity Directions (No 7)

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

Section 200

I, Dr Annaliese van Diemen, Deputy Chief Health Officer (Communicable Disease), consider it reasonably necessary to protect public health to give the following directions pursuant to section 200(1)(d) of the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) (PHW Act)**:

1 Preamble

- (1) The purpose of these directions is to restrict the operation of certain businesses and undertakings in order to limit the spread of Novel Coronavirus 2019 (**2019-nCoV**).
- (2) These directions replace the **Restricted Activity Directions (No 6)**, and:
 - (a) permit 10 members of the public to gather for religious purposes (in addition to the people reasonably required to facilitate the ceremony);
 - (b) require various operators to keep a record of members of the public who attend certain facilities to support contact tracing, if required;
 - (c) permit 10 members of the public to attend auction houses, real estate auctions and residential property inspections (in addition to the people reasonably required to facilitate the auction or inspection);
 - (d) permit 10 members of the public to attend support groups (in addition to the people reasonably required to facilitate the event);
 - (e) permit limited outdoor sport to occur; and
 - (f) permit professional sporting organisations to train and engage in professional sporting events at certain facilities.
- (3) These directions must be read together with the **Stay at Home Directions (No 6)** given on 12 May 2020.

2 Revocation

The **Restricted Activity Directions (No 6)** are revoked with effect from 11:59:00pm on 12 May 2020.

3 Citation

- (1) These directions may be referred to as the **Restricted Activity Directions (No 7)**.

- (b) providing a venue for a professional sporting event.
- (6) A person who operates a facility under subclause (5) must:
 - (a) request that each person who attends provide:
 - (i) their first name; and
 - (ii) a contact phone number,and, if provided by the person, must keep a record of those details, and the date and time at which the person attended the facility;
 - (b) only permit persons to attend the facility if necessary for the professional sporting event or training and the broadcasting of that event to occur; and

Note: Spectators are not necessary and not permitted for professional sporting events.

- (c) use reasonable endeavours to implement relevant recommendations by the Victorian Government to manage public health risks arising out of the operation of the facility.

Note: Recommendations may be based on the AIS Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment.

8 Places of worship

- (1) A person who owns, controls or operates a **place of worship** in Victoria may operate that place of worship during the restricted activity period only for the purpose of:
 - (a) hosting an essential public support service (whether that service is provided on a voluntary basis or otherwise);

Examples: a food bank, a service for homeless persons.
 - (b) hosting a support group;

Examples: for alcohol and drugs, family violence, and parenting.
 - (c) conducting a ceremony (including if the ceremony is to be broadcast, live or otherwise, via electronic means) or permitting private worship; or
 - (d) hosting a wedding or funeral.

Restrictions — support groups and ceremonies

- (2) A person who operates a place of worship under subclause (1)(b) or (1)(c) must not permit:
 - (a) more than 10 members of the public to be present, in addition to the person(s) reasonably required to host the support group or conduct the ceremony, in a single undivided indoor space at any one time; and
 - (b) in any case, the number of persons in a single undivided indoor space to exceed the density quotient.

Restrictions — ceremonies, weddings and funerals

- (3) A person who operates a place of worship under subclauses (1)(c) or (1)(d):
- (a) must not host a wedding or funeral, unless that wedding or funeral complies with the requirements of the **Stay at Home Directions (No 6)**; and

Note: the Stay at Home Directions (No 6) limit the number of people who may attend a wedding or funeral

- (b) must request that each person who attends the wedding or funeral or ceremony provide:
 - (i) their first name; and
 - (ii) a contact phone number,and, if provided by the person, must keep a record of those details, and the date and time at which the person attended the place of worship.

9 Restricted retail facilities

- (1) A person who owns, controls or operates a **restricted retail facility** in Victoria must not operate that facility during the restricted activity period.
- (2) A **restricted retail facility** means the following:
 - (a) a **beauty and personal care facility**;
 - (b) an auction house; or
 - (c) a market stall.

Permitted operations — auction houses

- (3) Despite subclause (1), a person who owns, controls or operates an auction house may operate that auction house for the purpose of conducting an auction:
 - (a) to be attended remotely by members of the public; or
 - (b) at the premises of the auction house, to be attended in person by no more than 10 members of the public (whether or not also attended remotely by other members of the public), in addition to the person(s) reasonably required to conduct the auction.
- (4) A person who owns, controls or operates an auction house during the restricted activity period must request that each person attending the premises provide:
 - (a) their first name; and
 - (b) a contact phone number,and, if provided, must keep a record of those details, and the date and time at which the person attended the facility.

15 Signage and cleaning requirements

Signage

(1) A person who owns, controls or operates:

- (a) an open retail facility;
- (b) a community facility;
- (c) a place of worship; or
- (d) an auction house;

which involves members of the public entering any single undivided indoor space, must during the restricted activity period display a sign at each public entry to each such space that includes a statement that the maximum number of people that may be present in the space at a single time is the density quotient, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

Example: if an indoor space is 8.5 metres long and 4.5 metres wide, its total area is 38.25 square metres. Its density quotient is 9.56. The sign should state that the maximum number of people that may be present in the space at a single time is 9.

Cleaning

(2) A person who owns, controls or operates:

- (a) an open retail facility;
- (b) a community facility;
- (c) a place of worship; or
- (d) an auction house;

must during the restricted activity period take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- (e) frequently touched surfaces are **cleaned** at least twice on any given day;
- (f) surfaces are cleaned when visibly soiled;
- (g) if an event is to occur, a reasonable period of time has elapsed since the conclusion of any earlier event to allow for cleaning in between the events; and
- (h) surfaces are cleaned immediately after a spill on the surface.

(3) To **clean** for the purposes of this clause, a person must wipe the surface with a disinfectant:

- (a) the label of which states a claim by the manufacturer that the disinfectant has anti-viral properties; or
- (b) made by a person according to instructions issued by the Department of Health and Human Services.