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Hello Everyone,

As you may have seen, the Victorian Government has announced an **easing of COVID restrictions for Regional Victoria from 11.59 pm tomorrow night (Thursday September 9)**.

This easing of restrictions will apply throughout our Diocese of Ballarat.

Religious gatherings and ceremonies will be permitted for up to **20 people** per venue (plus those required to conduct the ceremony).

Funerals (indoor and outdoor) will be permitted with up to **20 people** attending, plus those necessary to conduct the funeral. Children under 12 months old are not counted towards this cap.

Weddings (indoor and outdoor) will be permitted with up to **10 people** attending, plus those necessary to conduct the wedding. Children under 12 months old are not counted towards this cap.

Masks must be worn indoors and outdoors except if at home or if an exception applies.

I thank everyone who has helped to contain the pandemic in our region so that we can begin to gather again in person for Mass and other celebrations. While the number who can gather is still small, I pray that this might be the first step towards further easing of limits so that soon we will be able to come together in greater numbers. Thank you for supporting one another through these trying times.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul