

ASSEMBLY OF THE WORD

RESTRICTIONS ON PLACES OF WORSHIP DURING COVID-19

Places of worship are able to open with the following current provisions about distance between people, signage, hygiene and cleaning, as well as keeping a record of attendees. This record of attendees applies for any gatherings in your parish:

- Religious gatherings can be held indoors or outdoors. Venues must apply the two square metre rule to ensure people have enough room to maintain 1.5 metres distance between them. There are no group limits. The two square metre rule applies only if electronic record keeping is used. Otherwise, the four square metre rule applies.
- 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 and time 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.
- Holy water fonts are to be emptied or removed. At the Sign of Peace, the practice of shaking hands has ceased. During this time the congregation will be asked to pray for peace.
- The distribution of Holy Communion will be in the hand only and not on the tongue. There will be no distribution of the chalice.
- All ministers of Holy Communion (both ordinary and extraordinary) are to use hand sanitiser before the distribution of Holy Communion commences and are not to physically touch anyone in the act of blessing.
- A venue can have indoor or outdoor religious gatherings at the same time. Ceremonial participants other than faith leaders are included in the two square metre rule only if electronic record keeping is used. Otherwise, the four square metre rule applies.
- You must carry a face mask with you at all times when you leave home, unless you have a lawful reason not to.
- Places of worship can open to conduct weddings and funerals.
- Places of worship are open for private worship, for example individual prayer.

Updates are available from <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/religion-and-ceremony#are-places-of-worship-open>

ASH WEDNESDAY – YEAR B 2021

Prior to the Liturgy, two small bowls containing ashes are prepared. Normally, the ashes are made by burning the palms left from the previous Ash Wednesday. If this is not possible, ashes should be prepared from the burning of wood or other vegetation. The ashes are blessed during the Liturgy. There is no Communion given during this Liturgy.

NOTE ON ASH WEDNESDAY Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic

The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel”, or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”.

The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places. The Priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 12 January 2021.

Robert Card, Sarah, *Prefect*

✠ Arthur Rochem *Archbishop Secretary*

***This will be adapted for Assembly of the Word
(see blessing and giving of ashes below)***

INTRODUCTORY RITES

GATHERING HYMN

Stand

Quiet music is played while people assemble. The Leaders move to the front when the Assembly is to begin.

Leader 1: Let us commence our prayer on this solemn day with the words of Scripture:

All: Lord, you are merciful to all, and hate nothing you have created.
You overlook the sins of your people to call them to repentance.
You are the Lord our God.

Wisdom 11:24-25,27.

GREETING

All make the sign of the cross.

Leader 1: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader 1: Blessed be Jesus Christ,
who in the greatness of his love
died for us while we were still sinners.
Bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: Blessed be God forever.

WELCOME

Leader 2: Today, we, the Catholic community of
gather to hear the Word,
and commence the time of repentance and conversion
which the Church calls us to,
through this celebration of Ash Wednesday and the time of Lent.

We gather in unity with the Church throughout the world
and with our sisters and brothers
in neighbouring wider parish communities,
who are also gathering in the Lenten spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Leader 1: As we prepare to hear the Word of God,
we confess that we are sinners.
Let us ask the Lord for pardon and strength.

Brief pause for silent prayer.

All: I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault, **(striking the breast)**
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Leader 1: May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader 2: Let us pray.

Brief pause for silent prayer.

Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting
this campaign of Christian service,
so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils,
we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Joel 2:12-18 *Sit*

A period of silence, about one or two minutes, is recommended at the conclusion of each reading.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 50

Response: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, *Stand*
King of endless glory!
If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory!

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

One of the Leaders goes to the lectern.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

The Leader makes the sign of the cross on the book, then on forehead, lips and breast.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end of the Gospel:

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SHARED REFLECTION

Sit

- *A shared reflection explaining the meaning which these readings had for their original hearers, and indicating how these readings apply to this particular community, should now be given.*
- *The shared reflection may be led by one of the Leaders or another person from the Assembly.*
- *The reflection must be prepared beforehand and should be a sharing of what the scripture is saying to us today, rather than a 'sermon type' presentation.*
- *The reflection should only be of 3-5 minutes duration.*

** If this is not done, the following should be said:*

Leader: Let us now reflect in silence on the words of the Gospel and take them to our hearts.

After a brief time, the blessing and distribution of Ashes commences.

BLESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic – adapted for Assembly of the Word

The leader says the prayer for blessing the ashes. The ashes are sprinkled with holy water, without saying anything. The leader address all those present and only once says the formula, "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel."

The leader then cleanses their hands with sanitiser, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to them or, if appropriate, the leader goes to those who are standing in their places. The leader takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.

The Liturgical Commission offers an alternative suggestion. The distribution of ashes could proceed with the use of an individual cotton bud dipped in the ashes and signed on the forehead of each person present, without saying anything, ensuring the process is contactless.

Three people would be required for the distribution of ashes – the leader distributing the ashes, one person with a bowl to provide the leader with a new cotton bud for each person and one person with a larger bowl to collect the used cotton buds. The leader would be the only person touching the cotton bud. The leader cleanses her/his hands, puts on a face mask (gloves are optional) and distributes the ashes to those who come to them or, if appropriate, the leader goes to those who are standing in their places.

Leader 1: Dear friends in Christ,
let us implore God our Father
to renew us in spirit
as these ashes are placed on our heads
as a sign of repentance.

Brief pause for silent prayer.

Lord, you do not wish sinners to die
but to turn to you and live.
In your goodness hear our prayer:
Pour out your blessing on these ashes,
which we place on our heads to remind us
that we are dust and unto dust we shall return.

Grant that by our faithful observance of Lent
we may gain pardon for our sins
and newness of life
in the image of your risen Son.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Stand

The people are invited to pray; after the Prayers of the Faithful, the concluding prayer is said.

*It is desirable that the individual prayers be given by someone **other** than the Leader.*

Invitation to Prayer:

Leader 2: My sisters and brothers,
we should pray at all times,
but especially during this season of Lent:
We should keep watch with Christ
and pray to our Father.

Prayers of the Faithful for Lent can be found in the Appendices of the Altar Missal. It is recommended that a petition for vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life be included in the prayers and a petition for the Plenary Council.

Praying with Pope Francis: Each month Pope Francis puts forward a prayer intention and asks Catholic around the world to join him in prayer. These intentions cover all sorts of areas of life, encouraging faith, renewing hope and calling us to loving service.

February – Universal intention: Violence against women

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and healed.

Concluding Prayer:

Leader 2: Father, hear the prayers of your people.
 Give us what you have inspired us
 to ask you for in faith.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

RITE OF THANKSGIVING

PRAYER OF PRAISE

Leader 1: Let us praise the Lord.

Brief pause for silent prayer.

Praise to you, Father of mercies,
for in Christ's death and resurrection
you have set us free from sin
and offered us the promise of eternal life.
Your people give you glory:

All: We praise your name, O God.

Leader 2: Praise to you, Father of compassion,
 you lift those who are bowed down
 and give strength to those who suffer.
 You sustain us on this Lenten pilgrimage.
 Your people give you glory:

All: We praise your name, O God.

Leader 1: Praise to you, Father of love,
 you sent your Son into the world
 to be our Saviour and brother.
 In him we are reconciled
 into your loving embrace.
 Your people give you glory:

All: We praise your name, O God.

Leader 2: Praise to you, Father of all,
 in Christ we hear the Word of truth,
 the Gospel of salvation.
 Christ's example of faithful service
 is the pattern for Christian life.
 Your people give you glory:

All: We praise your name, O God.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Leader 1: Remembering that Jesus is in our midst as we are assembled here,
let us pray for unity and reconciliation.

Brief pause for silent prayer for peace.

Leader 1: Lord, may your healing love
which is present in this community
turn us from sin
and keep us on the way that leads to you.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

All: Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

GREETING

Leader 2: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

BLESSING

All make the sign of the cross.

Leader 2: May the Lord bless us
and free us from evil ✠
so that we may be steadfast
and serve him with all our hearts.

All: Amen.

DISMISSAL

Leader 1: Let us go forth in peace, to spend this time of Lent worthily
that we might love and serve the Lord always.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Leaders bow to the altar and return to their places in the Assembly.

Acknowledgements

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