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Hello Everyone

As I mentioned in my message of September 22, the Victorian government is proposing to introduce different provisions in various fields for people who are vaccinated against Covid-19 and those who are not. These variations will apply to places of worship as well as to other venues. I have been considering how we might arrange for everyone to have access to Mass, including those who, for various reasons, will not be vaccinated.

For most of our diocese at present, apart from areas in lockdown, we are able to have 20 people gather for Mass, with no question about vaccination. So as to keep the changes to a minimum, I suggest that we continue with the present limit of 20 people at Mass, with no question about vaccination, until November 5.

The government has indicated that from November 5 those who are fully vaccinated will be able to gather in greater numbers, with 1 person per 4 square metres, with a cap of 150 people. So, parishes will be able to have some Masses with these greater numbers. However, I ask that each parish continue to have at least one Mass each week as at present, with a limit of 20 people and so with no need to provide evidence of vaccination. In this way, there will be some opportunities for people to attend Mass without needing to refer to vaccination.

I recognise that this is far from ideal. I believe it would be much more appropriate to have access to common worship for everyone without distinctions. However, I propose the above arrangements as a way to provide some opportunities for common worship for everyone within the constraints of the government regulations.

Christ promised to be with us when even two or three gather in his name. May he guide us all as we come together to pray, whether in groups large or small.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul