



19 March 2020

Archbishop of Sydney releases Pastoral Letter on COVID-19

Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP has written a pastoral letter to Catholics, reassuring them that their safety and wellbeing is paramount during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Archbishop Fisher said Catholic churches across Sydney will follow federal government advice to minimise the spread of the coronavirus and limit attendees at Masses to no more than 100 people. Priests have been granted permission to temporarily increase the number of Masses and celebrate multiple Sunday Masses as necessary to accommodate these changes.

In cases where public Masses have to be suspended, a dispensation from attending Mass is granted and Catholics will be able to fulfil their Sunday Mass obligation by setting aside some time for prayer at home, reading the Scriptures of the day and watching Mass on television or online.

In his pastoral letter, Archbishop Fisher emphasised that priests will continue to serve the sick, elderly and frail, including those suffering from COVID-19, but parishioners who are unwell should not attend public Masses at this time.

“Please be assured that any Catholic who contracts COVID-19 will as far as possible be assisted by our clergy with the sacraments and other pastoral care. It’s at times like these that our pastors really shine”, Archbishop Fisher said.

“In addition to the sacramental care provided by parishes, healthy young volunteers and others should consider prudent ways to check in with the sick frail elderly or otherwise isolated to inquire whether they have particular needs- for groceries, medicine or simple company”.

Archbishop Fisher’s Pastoral Letter and Directions for the Archdiocese of Sydney are available online via this link: <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/coronavirus-updates/>

To assist parishioners unable to physically attend Mass through this crisis, a dedicated webpage has been set up through the Archdiocese of Sydney website at: <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/coronavirus-updates/>

Note for Broadcast Media:

A video message of Archbishop Fisher is available via this link:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/z16stb3pph6qy6c/20200318_covid19_nocrop_draft_01.mp4?dl=0

An audio message of the same message is available via this link:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/crpz9iz3bxcx6ip/20200318_covid19_audio_only.mp4?dl=0

ENDS

Media seeking further information/interviews please contact:

Michael Kenny, Manager Communications & News Media, Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney

Email: michael.kenny@sydneycatholic.org.au Mob: 0438 046 406