



15 May 2020

Dear Parish Priests, Principals, Sacramental Coordinators and Catechists,

In my communication of Wednesday, 18 March 2020, I shared with you the commitment of the Archdiocese of Perth to fully comply with and support the Government issued restrictions relevant to services and gatherings in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. I therefore directed that all celebrations of the Sacraments planned for 2020 and associated gatherings be temporarily suspended.

In the interim, the teaching of the Religious Education program for Catholic school students has continued in an online mode with the support of the Religious Education and Faith Formation Team at the Catholic Education Western Australia. The Catechist Service has also provided online modules for children attending the Parish Religious Education program. Both school and parish personnel have exercised much commitment and creativity in serving children and their families by continuing to provide support and opportunities for learning.

Given the success thus far of containing the spread of COVID-19 in Western Australia, there are now positive indications that some restrictions will be lifted in the coming weeks and months. The Western Australian Government has subsequently implemented its four phase COVID-19 Roadmap.

While the implementation of Phase 2 of the Roadmap commences on **Monday 18 May 2020**, due diligence and caution is to be exercised by all Catholic communities with regards to implementing the Government's directives. Therefore, during Phase 2 of the Roadmap, it is not yet possible to reschedule Sacrament celebrations and associated activities. Details of the Western Australian Government's COVID-19 Roadmap can be found at: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-wa-roadmap>

While students in Catholic schools return to face-to-face learning on Monday 18 May 2020, there are further considerations that preclude the reopening of Parish Religious Education Programs at this time. This will be monitored closely by both the Catechist Service and the Archdiocese of Perth with updates as necessary. It is important, therefore, that the provisions for Religious Education and Sacrament preparation for students in both Catholic schools and in the Parish Religious Education program continue in the formats that are currently permitted under Government directives.

We look forward to an ongoing and well-planned lifting of restrictions so we can gather safely as faith communities once again. We do not know exactly what that will look like. Therefore, we need to be collaborative and flexible within the parameters offered by our Church teachings and sacramental theology so that we can continue to generously support the children and families who will be eager to receive the Sacraments when this becomes possible.



Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth

We are a people of faith and of hope. We know the Lord is with us. Let us draw strength from this faith and support each other. Let us continue to recognise the presence of Jesus in all the different ways in which he steps into our lives. And most of all let us keep praying for each other and for those who are selflessly putting themselves at the service of our community at this challenging time.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ Timothy Costelloe SDB

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