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24 June 2020

**Directives for Churches and Chapels within the
Catholic Archdiocese of Perth
Phase 4 of Western Australia's COVID 19 Roadmap from
The Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On **Saturday, 27 June 2020**, Western Australia will commence **Phase 4** of the Western Australian Government's COVID-19 roadmap. Under **Phase 4**, Western Australia's COVID-19 restrictions will be relaxed even further, as Western Australia's roadmap is updated to complete the removal of all restrictions. The WA roadmap has been developed in conjunction with the National Cabinet principles and is based on the best health advice for WA. The current health advice is that we can cautiously continue to reopen or increase capacity of certain venues, and increase indoor and outdoor gatherings while continuing to practise physical distancing and good personal hygiene. The WA COVID-19 roadmap can be accessed at <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-wa-roadmap#phase4>

It is incumbent upon each of us to continue to exercise responsibility in keeping infection rates low and demonstrating diligent citizenship as well as Christian concern and charity. I take this opportunity to again acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our clergy and all those women and men across the Archdiocese of Perth who have continued to adapt to 'the new normal' in our gradual return to our parishes, worship, Catholic agencies and communities of faith. I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to each and every one of you.

Today, I recommit the Archdiocese of Perth to the support of, and compliance with, government directives and associated public health advice. The Western Australian and Federal Governments continue to issue ongoing public health advice in relation to COVID-19. The Archdiocese of Perth continues to be guided by this advice through our ongoing commitment to monitoring any threat posed by COVID-19 to Catholic communities across our Archdiocese.

I write to share with you a revised series of directives which come into effect across the Archdiocese of Perth commencing **Saturday, 27 June 2020**. The website of the Archdiocese of Perth has a dedicated COVID-19 web page on which all statements from the Archdiocese of Perth can be found. You can access this page at: <http://perthcatholic.org.au/COVID19.htm>

The following directives apply to the clergy, religious and the lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Perth and commence on **Saturday, 27 June 2020**:

- Churches and chapels are permitted to open with capacity limits determined by the two (2) square metres per person rule, excluding the people required to conduct the service.



- There is to be two (2) square metres of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing by keeping 1.5 metres from persons of other households.
- Additionally to remain open during Phase 4 churches and chapels need to:
 - maintain a minimum of two (2) square metres per person
 - maintain hygiene and frequent cleaning
- Latest information and advice, including health support measures and restrictions can be found at: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-wa-roadmap#phase4>
- Latest frequently asked questions relevant to Religious practices can be found at: https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/phase-4-easing-of-restrictions-frequently-asked-questions#religious_practices
- Western Australia's COVID Safety Guidelines for Phase 4 are being updated and will be available online before the Phase 4 starting date of Saturday, 27 June 2020 at: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-business-and-industry-advice#covid-safety-plans>
- **COVID Safety Plans:** Churches and chapels must ensure that their COVID Safety Plan is available for inspection by authorised officers.
 - Each church and chapel must complete a COVID Safety Plan for each church or chapel prior to reopening.
 - If your parish has multiple churches/premises, you must prepare a COVID Safety Plan for each church/premise.
 - Churches and chapels that opened during Phase 3, or which will reopen in Phase 4, should review the new guidelines and update their COVID Safety Plans where applicable.
 - If a church or chapel's capacity is increased during Phase 4 this should be reflected on an updated COVID Safety Plan certificate.
 - Each church and chapel must display a COVID Safety Plan certificate at an entry point to the church or chapel.
- **Visitor Registers:** Churches and chapels are no longer required to keep an attendance register as part of their COVID Safety Plans.
 - Churches and chapels that kept attendance registers previously are required to keep the information in the register until twenty eight (28) days after the State of Emergency has been lifted.
- **Seating in the Church:** Physical distancing of one (1) person per two (2) square metres must be observed inside the church or chapel. Available seating must be clearly marked with signage to assist in maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres between people of different households.
- Hand sanitizers are to be available at each entrance to every church and chapel.
- Clear guidelines must be put in place to direct people on how to enter and exit the church or chapel to ensure that this is done systematically to ensure that appropriate physical distancing is observed.
- Holy Water fonts/stoups in all churches and chapels are to remain empty.
- Pews, seats, seatbacks, top rails, kneelers, doors, door knobs, microphones, sacristies, toilets/bathrooms and all other communal areas are to be cleaned, wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- Parish newsletters or bulletins should not be re-used. Sufficient copies should be made to ensure that people get copies, but then they must either take them home or dispose of them.
- Hymnals or shared copies of texts are not to be used.



- Persons who feel unwell, who have flu/respiratory symptoms, elevated body temperatures or who have been in contact in the previous fourteen (14) days with persons suspected to have, or who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are not permitted to enter churches or chapels.
- **St Mary's Cathedral, Perth:** please refer to the St Mary's Cathedral website and social media pages for updates relevant to the Cathedral: <https://stmaryscathedralperth.com.au/>

Celebration of the Sacraments of the Church

- Preparations for, and the celebration of, First Reconciliation (school-aged children) and First Holy Communion (school-aged children) may continue. Physical distancing of one (1) person per 2 square metres must be observed inside the church or chapel. Available seating must be clearly marked with signage to assist in maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres between people of other households.
- Confirmation (school-aged children) remains temporarily suspended, except for those in danger of death. This temporary suspension will be reviewed ahead of the commencement of Phase 5 of the Western Australian Government's COVID-19 roadmap.
- Individual parishes may choose to celebrate the Rite of Initiation with RCIA Elect and candidates.
- There should be two (2) square metres of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing by keeping 1.5 metres from other persons of other households.

Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA)

- Individual parishes may choose to celebrate the Rite of Initiation with RCIA Elect and candidates.
- Please refer to Baptism and Confirmation directives when celebrating these sacraments with the RCIA Elect and candidates.
- For the anointing with Chrism, the celebrant should use cotton balls with a separate one for each candidate. These cotton balls must be disposed of appropriately after the celebration.
- Please contact Dr Carmel Suart, Director of the Office of Christian Initiation, on either 08 6104 3696 or christian.initiation@perthcatholic.org.au for any queries in relation to RCIA.

Baptism

- The number of people that can attend a Baptism will be determined by the maximum capacity of each church or chapel, based on at least two (2) square metres of floor space per person.
- Fresh baptismal water must be used for each candidate.
- Full immersion baptism is prohibited unless the water in the baptismal pool is drained between candidates. The baptismal pool must subsequently be cleaned and disinfected after each full immersion.
- For the anointing with Chrism at baptism, the celebrant should use cotton balls with a separate one for each candidate. These cotton balls must be disposed of appropriately after the celebration.
- There should be two (2) square metres of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing by keeping 1.5 metres from persons of other households.



Confessions

- Priests can provide opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, according to the First Rite.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is to occur in a well-ventilated space and with appropriate social distancing being maintained at all times, including the absolution. The Sacrament can be celebrated in the sanctuary but provision for anonymity should be made.
- There should be two (2) square metres of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing by keeping 1.5 metres from other persons of other households.

Masses

Priests must exercise judgement in deciding whether it is yet practicable to conduct public Masses or to reopen churches and chapels. In light of the two (2) square metre rule under Phase 4 of the WA Government's COVID-19 roadmap, it may be necessary for Parish Priests to implement revised weekday and weekend Mass timetables. Parishes are to put in place procedures to ensure that numbers of attendees at all Masses conform to the directives of the Western Australian Government. The faithful continue to be dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Parishes are encouraged to continue live streaming Masses.

- Allocated seating for each member of the congregation is to be clearly indicated through the use of signage.
- In view of the now long-standing practice of receiving Holy Communion in the hand, all Catholics receiving Holy Communion at Masses celebrated in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite are very strongly encouraged, out of concern for the health of others including the celebrant and other ministers, to refrain from receiving Holy Communion on the tongue.
- Offertory gifts are to be in closed vessels or, where this is not possible, vessels should be appropriately covered.
- Offertory processions and Gospel processions are to be omitted.
- The Sign of Peace is to be given without physical contact.
- Collections are not to be taken up during the Mass. Churches and chapels can install boxes or containers for offerings at the entrance to the church or wherever they decide to be appropriate.
- The Precious Blood is not to be shared from the chalice at any Masses and is reserved to the celebrant(s) only. The celebrant and concelebrants are to receive from the chalice by intinction.
- All priests and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to wash their hands in soap and water, or are to use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser both immediately before and immediately after the distribution of Holy Communion.
- A physical distance of 1.5 metres between people in the Communion Procession is to be observed. Churches and chapels may wish to dedicate ushers to facilitate the movement of people at the time Communion is distributed.
- Pews, seats, seatbacks, top rail and kneelers are to be wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- The pulpit, lectern, credence table, ministers' seats and anything handled by multiple people is to be wiped down and sanitised regularly.
- Church ushers may need to remind parishioners and the faithful to maintain social distancing whether they are entering or exiting a church or chapel for Mass or in the Communion Procession.



- There should be two (2) square metres of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing by keeping 1.5 metres from persons of other households.

Confirmations

- The celebration of Confirmation (school-aged children) remains temporarily suspended, except for those in danger of death or when the baptism of an adult is celebrated. This temporary suspension will be reviewed ahead of the commencement of Phase 5 of the Western Australian Government's COVID-19 roadmap.
- Individual parishes may choose to celebrate the Rite of Initiation with RCIA Elect and candidates.
- Delegation for the individual celebration of Confirmation is to be requested from the Office of the Vicar General.

Weddings

- Churches and chapels are permitted to celebrate weddings.
- There must be two (2) square metres of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing by keeping 1.5 metres from persons of other households.

Funerals

- Churches and chapels are permitted to celebrate funerals.
- There should be two (2) square metres of floor space per person with each person practicing physical distancing by keeping 1.5 metres from persons of other households.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick *(for individuals)*

- Priests will continue to respond to appropriate requests to anoint people, and will continue to celebrate the sacrament on an individual basis.
- Upon request, and with strict compliance with restrictions in place within nursing homes, aged-care facilities and hospitals, priests will continue to minister the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

- The communal celebration of the Anointing of the Sick is to be temporarily suspended.

Resources

A variety of resources continue to be offered by the Archdiocese of Perth on the dedicated COVID-19 webpage and through the Centre for Liturgy and Centre for Faith Enrichment websites:

Archdiocese of Perth Centre for Faith Enrichment website

- <https://cfe.org.au/>

Daily Mass Livestream

- [Mass Online - Archdiocese of Perth](#)
- [Mass on Demand – CathNews](#)
- [Mass for You at Home \(Channel 10 -- aired 6am each Sunday\)](#)
- [Mass on Demand – Archdiocese of Brisbane](#)
- [Daily Mass -- Archdiocese of Melbourne](#)
- [Daily Mass -- Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn](#)



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Mass Readings and Liturgical Resources

- [Readings of the Day](#)
- [Prayers for Time of Pandemic](#)

Prayers and Scripture

- Act of Spiritual Communion – Diocese of Bathurst
- [Prayer from Apostolic Nuncio in Australia, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana](#)

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- [COVID-19 Information for Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)

The Western Australian Government's COVID-19 Roadmap

Current information on the measures being taken to protect the Western Australian community in order to minimise the potential impacts of COVID-19 in WA can be found at: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-wa-roadmap#phase4>

I assure you of my continued prayers and gratitude as together we as an archdiocese seek to continue to witness and proclaim our Christ-centred hope within a global context that is collectively seeking to respond to the uncertainty and reality of COVID-19.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Timothy Costelloe SDB

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