

Covid-19 Catholic Diocese of Auckland – UPDATE 16 March

In light of the serious health risks to the most vulnerable among us due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and having taken advice from the Ministry of Health, last week the Catholic Church of Aotearoa New Zealand stopped

- the use of shared holy water from fonts,
- communion on the tongue,
- communion from the chalice,
- shaking hands or other physical contact at the Sign of Peace during Mass.

I realise that many people have a number of questions regarding our current situation and how we both pray together and care for everyone.

Sunday Obligation

The Mass is core to our Catholic identity and our source and summit. However, if you are ill, self-isolating or if you believe that attending Mass would put you or others at risk, please stay home. *You are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass*, until further notice.

Older adults, people with underlying medical conditions, and family members of such individuals should take special care in discerning Mass attendance.

If you are unable to attend Mass due to Coronavirus restrictions, illness or age, you can find resources — daily Scripture readings, etc, on the diocesan resource page from Wednesday 18 March.

If you are ill for any reason or taking care of someone who is, you also are dispensed from Lenten disciplines and sacrifices. Your illness and the care you are providing to others is your Lenten sacrifice.

Pastoral Care for Homebound/Rest Home Residents

When visiting parishioners at home, who are not self-isolating wash your hands before giving Communion. Do not visit if you are in any way unwell.

Do not make pastoral visits to people who are self-isolating until isolation ends. However, do offer phone support, drop off newsletters, NZ Catholic or other resources into letter boxes if appropriate.

Visits to people in rest homes or hospitals should follow infection control advice from staff of the institution. Be mindful that many institutions caring for the vulnerable are closed to visitors.

Pray

Remember to pray each day for those who are suffering from Coronavirus, for those who care for them, for scientists working to find a cure, and for all those who are anxious and afraid during this time of uncertainty.

Because this is an evolving situation, the diocese will keep you updated regarding any changes to this decision.

Let us remember that “Our God is kind and merciful” as we support one another practically, in our choices, and in our prayer.

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