



For all things give thanks.
1 THESS 5:18

COVID-19 DIRECTIVE FROM BISHOP BRIAN MASCORD to take effect on the weekend of 29/30 October 2022

My Dear Brothers and Sisters

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed many challenges on us as a faith community. Some of us have lost loved ones and some have ongoing ill health as a result of the COVID-19 virus. As we reflect on this experience, we can all agree we have learnt a great deal on how we interact and care for each other when we gather as a community of faith. Now that the authorities have removed restrictions, it is appropriate we also review our remaining diocesan restrictions, which are hereby revoked. However, we should take the experiences learnt from the pandemic and ensure, as we move forward, that we continue to keep each other safe. We are a people where faith works through love (Galatians 5:6).

HOLY DAY DISPENSATION

Commencing the weekend of 29/30 October 2022 (31st Sunday in Ordinary Time) the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation will be reinstated. However, out of proper self-care and responsible love for their fellow worshippers, the faithful should not attend Mass or other gatherings when ill. The Catechism, when speaking of our Sunday obligation states, “the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor” (No. 2181). Therefore, while we should be diligent in attending Sunday Mass we should not attend Mass if we have a suspected contagious illness.

RECEIVING THE EUCHARIST “ON THE TONGUE”

Pastors may commence administering Communion on the tongue. However, care needs to be exercised in the manner it is administered. Many of the faithful remain concerned and vigilant regarding hygiene and pastors should be conscious of those that are vulnerable. Each pastor should minister responsibly, conscious of the hygiene standards we should always apply. All clergy and those who help them should still sanitise their hands before distributing Holy Communion. Also, two options could be considered for the distribution of Holy Communion. The pastor himself could minister Communion on the tongue, leaving other ministers to minister on the hand only. Alternatively, Communion on the tongue could be given at the end of the Communion line, after all those who have received Communion on the hand.

HOLY WATER STOUPS

Holy water stoups can now be filled. Hand sanitiser must be available to those who may wish to use it after blessing themselves.

MOVING FORWARD

As we now move forward into a “new normal” we must continue to care for each other and keep each other safe. We still see COVID-19 active in the community and experience the loss of loved ones to the illness. I pray we move together as one in love and unity. Yet, I also encourage everyone to participate with joy in the Eucharist, the great memorial of our Saviour’s death and resurrection.

Yours in Christ

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD

BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

12 October 2022

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