



Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Parish, Rosemeadow

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6 October 2021

My Dear Parishioners,

No doubt you will be aware of the latest developments regarding the 'Roadmap for NSW' announced last week in relation to the easing of Covid restrictions. As always, there has been much information and misinformation about what these involve, especially in regard to Churches and their re-opening. The main purpose of my writing to you today is to let you know what these involve and how they will affect our Parish and Diocese.

The Roadmap to reopening is in three stages: 70%, 80% and 90% full vaccination of the population. When 70% are fully vaccinated (11 October) Churches may re-open. However, since this would exclude those who are partially vaccinated or unvaccinated, churches in the Diocese of Wollongong will not re-open until 25 October when 80% fully vaccination has been reached. At this point all will be able to attend Places of Worship whether fully or partially vaccinated, or unvaccinated. The reason for this is that while we may recognise, regardless of personal feelings, that restrictions may be placed upon workplaces, there can be no discrimination imposed between people to attend Places of Worship. This principle is of the most profound importance, way beyond this individual issue, since it recognises and protects the most fundamental principle of Natural and Moral law: the inalienable right of the human person to freedom of religion and conscience, and to practise that in private and in public without interference by the State. If this is not protected, then all other human rights, like the right to life itself, will be forfeited. *I repeat here my advice to everyone who can be vaccinated to do so for their own good and the common good of all.* But the right of every person to follow their fully informed and educated conscience must be respected and upheld. If it isn't, even by those who disagree, then they themselves will have no guarantee that their own freedom will not be compromised and suppressed in the future. History itself, proves this with catastrophic results.

This, of course, does not prevent or contravene necessary restrictions on numbers congregating or other requirements for safety purposes. Therefore, the following requirements will apply:

- Attendees will be limited to 1 person per 4 square meters, meaning up to 200 people at Rosemeadow
- 1.5 meter social distancing wherever possible
- **Face masks must be worn**, and hand sanitiser used
- No congregational singing
- After Mass, please use a disinfectant wipe to rub over surfaces you have come in contact with and place them in the bins provided as you leave. ***Please wait until the priest has left the Sanctuary before doing this. Thank you.***

NOTE: When we reach 90% full vaccination, expected to be 1st December, these restrictions will be further eased, and relevant information will be published then.

Please note the following:

ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION All registration for Mass attendance **will be through** Eventbrite on the Parish Website or by using the QR Code at the church entry with your mobile phone. *Without doing this, entry will not be possible.* Its best to use Eventbrite as QR code entry is only possible if seats are available. **SO PLEASE REGISTER BEFOREHAND.** Go to the parish website, www.olhcrosemeadow.org.au or the Parish App and click the **Register for Mass** button. Follow the prompts to whichever Mass you want to attend and complete the details. *Online registration closes at 3pm the previous day for weekday Masses, and 3pm on Saturday for the Vigil and Sunday Masses.* Please arrive **AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFORE the start of Mass** to avoid delay. *Once Mass starts, the doors will be closed.* For all other parish gatherings, functions or meetings, registration will be by the QR Code only using your phone. Thank you for your cooperation.

NOTE: MASS REGISTRATION WILL COMMENCE ON 18 OCTOBER.

MASS I will continue to livestream the **SATURDAY 6 PM VIGIL MASS AND TUESDAY 6.30 PM weekday Mass**. The direct link to the parish YouTube channel is:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQhkeubtYCBu_elfcglmaw or by accessing it from the Parish Website or Parish App. Please pass this information on to any other parishioner you are in contact with.

ROSARY via Zoom from Fr. Sarkis' private chapel in the Presbytery each Thursday at 7pm.

Join with this link, <https://dowcatholic.zoom.us/j/64552343492> or use the QR code at the side.



FUNERALS are still permitted but with a cap of 10 people attending, excluding the Priest and funeral directors. *From 25 October the same conditions as for Mass will apply.*

BAPTISMS are all suspended until 25 October.

WEDDINGS Small weddings are now possible with up to 5 guests. Contact Fr. Sarkis through the Parish Office for these. *From 25 October the same conditions as for Mass will apply.*

CUPOLA REPAIRS I am happy to say that internal repairs to the ceiling and wall area of the Cupola and Sanctuary will be completed this week and will be ready for when the church reopens.

PARISH OFFICE From **Tuesday 12 October** the Parish Office will re-open. However, it will *only be open from Tuesday to Thursday*. For the moment it will be closed on Fridays until we are able to open then also.

Please remember the critical need for parish income via the Planned Giving to continue. Without this regular and ongoing income, the parish's ability to operate is severely impacted. This is why I have been encouraging parishioners to transition from envelopes to Direct Debit Giving. If you wish to do so, email the parish office, or ring and leave a message and we will contact you to arrange this. Otherwise, please drop your planned giving envelopes into the secure letter box at the parish office, or at the fence box if the gates are closed. *I want to thank all those parishioners who have continued to do this during this lockdown period and ask others to please do the same. I also thank those who have made donations to the Parish. Please don't forget the first collection either- I still have to live even in the lockdown! Thank you to all those who have kindly done so. God bless you all and your families.*

Please remember to let the parish office know if you have changed your email or phone details so we can keep our records up to date. And let other parishioners know that this information has been received by you via email, and if they have not registered their own email address with the parish office, to please do so by contacting us and giving them to us. They will then be able to receive these updates directly themselves. All updates are also accessible via the parish bulletin which is uploaded every week to the Parish Website and the Parish App.

My brothers and sisters, let us continue to pray for each other to be strengthened in faith and hope as we now move to be able to gather once again to worship and give praise to God. I continue to pray for you all in my daily Mass and prayers; please pray for me also. May our Patroness, Our Lady Help of Christians, and great St. Joseph, pray for us.

God bless you all

Father Christopher G Sarkis
Parish Priest.