

A Pathway through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Family, religion, work, education, leisure and care are the first and foundational priorities by which our pathway through the COVID-19 pandemic ought to be measured.

The Archdiocese advocates:

- That the principle of fairness is applied in Victoria, so that our Catholic community is not discriminated against or unduly treated at any stage.
- That we can each practice our faith with integrity and in charity.
- That faith communities experience as much freedom as is practicable, while staying committed to safety of the community.
- That the voice of the Church be motivated by mature and confident faith, not fear or anxiety.

Our ministry will not stop, even in a Pandemic

Creative ways of ministering to God's People have been found: Live streaming Masses and broadcasts; sacramental care under social restrictions; phoning isolated parishioners when we couldn't meet face-to-face; attending care facilities and hospitals; serving our people responsibly. Our ministry to those in need will not stop, but will continually adapt according to circumstance.

Opening our doors in the Pandemic

Our Catholic communities in Melbourne have been praying and working through the Pandemic, looking forward to re-opening our doors for sacramental celebrations again. The Mass is our primary means of gathering together in faith; it is the source and summit of our Christian life, and its life-giving nourishment and healing is essential. If churches *can* be opened, even for outdoor gatherings, then they *should* be opened.

The Pandemic is a health and an economic crisis

The Catholic Church follows Christ's way of serving people in need. This means reaching for the common good, where no one is left behind and a place for everyone is found. We are committed to the lives and livelihoods of all Victorians. We have cooperated with Government restrictions, even when that has been hard going and we would have liked to do much more for one another.

The Church's voice with Government and our communities

Since the Pandemic began, the Archdiocese has engaged in ongoing dialogue with authorities, including Government, parliamentarians at state and federal level, police and health department officials. The Archdiocese works constructively with Government to remedy any unintentional oversights in restrictions guidelines.

Roadmap

The Victorian Government Roadmap for the staged easing of restrictions offers some clarity, although its application calls for further dialogue. Steps have been taken to address areas of concern throughout the Pandemic, including the availability of viaticum for the sick and the dying, freedom to hear Confession, and permits for church staff assisting with essential services.

The lives of all Victorians matter. Opening our doors safely, joyfully and respectfully matters.

Further information

Please contact the Archdiocesan COVID-19 hotline on (03) 9926 2469 or email covid-19@cam.org.au

