



26 May 2020

Dear Priests and Parish Leaders

Kia tau te rangimārie ki a koutou – Peace be with you

### **Resumption of Masses and Liturgical Celebrations**

We write to you following the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday that the restrictions for gatherings will be lifted to 100. We write with jubilation that Masses may therefore resume from noon Friday 29 May.

Throughout this pandemic, the safety of you and parishioners has been important to us. We understand that many churches may not be able to resume services if parish leadership needs more time to prepare. We are supportive of parishes making decisions fit for the safety of their church community.

For services to resume, all health and safety requirements as declared by the Ministry of Health must be adhered to strictly. We note their advice will be updated later this week and will be available at <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-system/alert-level-2/>. The maximum number permitted at a Mass or a liturgical celebration will be determined by the ability to space people. In other words, it may not be possible to have 100 people in a small church.

Not all parishioners will be able to attend Mass because of the restrictions of numbers. Others will not attend due to health reasons, concerns or fears. For these reasons, the dispensation of attendance at Sunday Mass continues.

Mass restrictions under pandemic remain in place:

- At the Sign of Peace, people should avoid shaking hands or other contact with one another, and instead smile, nod or bow to one another.
- Holy Communion is not to be distributed from the chalice.
- Communion is only to be distributed in the hand, not on the tongue.
- Holy water is to be removed from vessels at the church door.

We wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of diocesan offices and parishes during this lockdown. We have spoken of our delight at the creative way you and parishioners have gathered digitally or supported one another from afar. We now share in your joy at being able to gather again in celebration of the Eucharist.

Yours sincerely in Christ

**✠ Patrick Dunn, Bishop of Auckland and NZCBC President**

**✠ John Dew, Cardinal Archbishop of Wellington and NZCBC Vice President**

**✠ Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Hamilton and NZCBC Secretary**

**✠ Paul Martin SM, Bishop of Christchurch**

**✠ Michael Dooley, Bishop of Dunedin**

**✠ Michael Gielen, Auxiliary Bishop of Auckland**