



*"Fear not, for I am with you."
Isaiah 41:10*

COVID-19

13th, August 2021

Dear Fathers, Parishes and Faithful of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes

Over the past few days we have seen various regional areas in NSW become subject to stay at home orders (including a significant area of our diocese) as the COVID-19 Delta strain has moved out into the regions. This unfolding situation is serious and has caused us great concern.

We as a Church have a moral obligation to ensure that our communities are kept safe at all times. Keeping our communities safe during the pandemic is an act of charity towards one another. I remind everyone that this is not a time to argue the facts and deny the realities of the current crises we as a state are now facing. We must all cooperate with the regulations set out by the NSW government and the diocese.

In addition, I remind you all that our Holy Father, Pope Francis and the Bishops of Australia encourage you all to discuss with your doctors about getting vaccinated. Getting vaccinated protects you and promotes the common good of the community.

I ask that you join with me in prayer to our Blessed and Holy Mother under the title of Our Lady of Perpetual Help patroness of Wilcannia-Forbes that she will keep us all safe and strong during these uncertain times.

Attached to this letter is a list of both government and diocesan regulations that are already in place and have been updated with various ongoing changes by the NSW government.

Yours in Christ

The Most Reverend Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE DD
Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes

The Most Reverend Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE D.D
Bishop of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes
Bishops office
16 Johnson Street
Forbes NSW 2871



COVID-19 restrictions for Churches

Catholic Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes

Continued and Updated restrictions

Updated 12th, August 2021

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

- Masks are compulsory from the age of 12 onwards in all indoor settings including Churches. Priests are to wear a mask at times when not speaking.
- Singing by the congregation is prohibited.
- A choir of 5 people MAX is allowed. These cantors must wear facemasks at all times and are subject to the 4 square meter rule.
- The capacity of the Church is subject to the 4 square meters.
- Pews must be clearly marked to ensure social distancing.
- Weddings are allowed in regional NSW, subject to a COVID-19 safety plan filled and sent to the Chancery.
- Funerals may be celebrated but the capacity is subject to the 4 square meter rule.
- A reminder that it is mandatory for everyone to sign in either by the QR Codes or via a paper register. Paper registrations must be filed in the Parish for future reference.
- It is mandatory that each Church has a QR Code, this has been provided by the Chancery at the rollout of the QR system early last year.

DIOCESAN REGULATIONS

- Everyone must sanitize before entering the Church.
- The reader may take off their facemask during the proclamation of the word (including the prayers of the faithful)
- Priests are to sanitize their hands at the offertory and before the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Extraordinary ministers must sanitize there
- The sign of peace is prohibited as has been in all previous directives
- Communion only under one kind (The Body of Christ)
- The Procession of Gifts is prohibited.
- Holy water prohibited in the entrances of Churches
- During the Eucharistic prayer, the bread to be consecrated for the faithful must be covered by the lid of the ciborium, pall or purifier to ensure that droplets do not fall upon the elements. If you wish, you may wear a mask instead during the Eucharistic prayer.
- Priests and Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must wear a facemask during distribution of Holy Communion.
- Other celebrations of the Sacraments such as Baptisms, Reconciliation, 1st Holy Communions and Confirmations may be celebrated but capacity is subject to the 4 square meter rule of the NSW government.
- School Masses and Liturgies are still allowed. Although no visitors (Parishioners, Parents etc.) are to be in attendance. All School Masses and Liturgies are to be celebrated separately from the scheduled Parish Masses/Liturgies.