



Archdiocese of Cape Town

Office of the Auxiliary Bishop of Cape Town

To all Clergy, Religious and Catholic Institutions in the Archdiocese of Cape Town

Proposed changes in Covid 19 Safety Measures for our Liturgies

At the outset we wish to thank all concerned for their diligence and cooperation in creating and maintaining a safe worship environment during this difficult time. Until such time that Covid-19 no longer poses a threat to life, we must maintain our vigilance. In this regard we appeal to all to properly wear masks, to avoid close physical contact, and to continue with the recommended hygiene practices. It is also necessary to strive for brevity in our celebrations during this time of restrictions.

Recently the NICD has indicated that there are signs of increased infection rates in some parts of the country and that the Western Cape ranks second on the list of high infections. At the same time we have been encouraged by the National Department of Health to lessen the restrictions and the NICD has expressed optimism with respect to the country's ability to offer treatment to infected persons. Simply stated, we appear to be in a better position now than prior to the onset of the previous wave.

With all this in mind, we have given the matter serious consideration and feel that we should, where possible, lessen the restrictions as follows:

Numbers in attendance: We request Parish Priests/Administrators to discuss the issue with their lay leaders, and where appropriate, to increase the numbers from the present thirty percent to **no more than fifty percent** of the seating capacity of the Church. Here we rely on the discretion of the Parish Priest/Administrator. We once again attach a copy of the *pro forma* occupancy certificate for those who have need of it. It needs to be completed, signed by the Parish Priest/Administrator or the Superior of the Community, and displayed at all entrances to the Church/Chapel.

Singing: Once again, depending on the discretion of the Parish Priest/Administrator (in dialogue with the lay leadership); choirs of no more than six members suitably distanced and all wearing masks may be engaged. The arrangement of one or two cantors might still be suitable for some parts of the liturgy. Keeping in mind the airborne nature of infections, singing by all in the church must be avoided at this stage.

We must bear in mind that we still need to practice caution at all times and must **avoid the crowding of the entrance and exit points**. It might be useful to have ushers in attendance so as to manage the situation. Those who are more vulnerable i.e. senior citizens and those with co-morbidities ought not to attend liturgical celebrations and instead to take advantage of the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation granted by the Archbishop for this time of danger. That dispensation has been extended until further notice. We are applying our minds to the lifting of the dispensation and ask that parishes plan for this to happen prior to Easter this year. In this regard we will have to monitor the situation very carefully and be guided by the recommendations of the NICD. Once the dispensation has been revoked, the usual conditions will apply for those who are ill.

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In order to prepare for some sort of normalisation in the future we need to strongly motivate and encourage people to be vaccinated as a matter of urgency.

We wish you well in your efforts to stay safe and to promote an atmosphere of wellness among those you serve. May our Lord continue to bless you with strength as the new year unfolds.

Fraternally,

+ Sylvester David OMI



Bishop S. David OMI
VG/Auxiliary Bishop

4 January 2022

COVID-19 OCCUPANCY COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE



FULL
CAPACITY
OF VENUE

50%
CAPACITY
OF VENUE

NAME.....CELL.....EMAIL.....

AUTHORISED SIGNATURE.....DATE.....