



DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA

**Vicar General & Moderator of the Curia
Diocese of Parramatta**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Re: COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update

NSW Health has today revised the COVID-19 guidelines for places of worship, effective 23 October 2020.

The maximum number of people who can attend religious gatherings will be lifted from 100 to 300. This will still be subject to the 4 square metre rule.

As an example, if your church has 1,200 square metres of space – the maximum allowed would be 1,200 divided by 4 i.e. you can have 300 people in the church. If, however, your church has 400 square metres of space – the maximum allowed would be 400 divided by 4 and hence the limit will still be 100 (and not 300).

Notwithstanding the above, NSW Health has previously confirmed to the Diocese of Parramatta that the maximum limit applies to both outdoor and indoor services.

Therefore, if you have a smaller church building, but a large outdoor area where Mass can be held, the outdoor space can be utilised for the 4 square metre rule and you may potentially be able to have more people attend Mass.

This may be a possibility as the weather warms up. However, please be mindful of the following:

- The 1.5 metre physical distancing rules will continue to apply whether the Mass is held indoors or outdoors.
- No congregational singing should occur
- Face masks are still strongly encouraged
- Mingling and social gatherings in the outdoor area should also not occur after the Mass (This would be considered an outdoor social gathering, where the current limit is set at 30)
- If you are intending to have outdoor Masses, please update your COVID19 Safety Plans to reflect this. The calculations you are using to calculate your maximum number of parishioners that can attend should be updated in your plan. Your plan should also include how you are intending to manage the inflow and outflow of Parishioners after the Mass to ensure that people do not gather unnecessarily.

With my prayers during these troubling times,

Very Rev Peter G. Williams
Vicar General & Moderator of the Curia