



ST PATRICK'S PARISH
MORTLAKE

ST PATRICK'S, MORTLAKE CHURCH RE-OPENING SCHEDULE

Dear Parishioners,

You will be aware of the recent changes announced by the Government in relation to the easing of Covid restrictions. This note summarises and re-states the Archbishop's directives for the re-opening of churches, in recognising that Worship is more akin to an essential service, and not merely a recreational activity. **Summary of stages:**

1. STAGE ONE – WHEN 70% ARE VACCINATED – ESTIMATED DATE 11 OCTOBER

Churches will be entitled on this date to **open to the vaccinated only**, however, **churches in the archdiocese will remain shut during this time**. The Archbishop has decided that **we will patiently wait the estimated two further weeks until we reach 80% fully vaccinated before re-opening our churches to the public**, and conducting public Masses etc.

2. STAGE TWO – WHEN 80% ARE FULLY VACCINATED – ESTIMATED DATE 25 OCTOBER

At 80% fully vaccinated **we will open our churches and ceremonies to “mixed” congregations (fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated and as yet unvaccinated); the 4 sqm rule will apply, and masks must be worn indoors**. We will not be required to check a person's vaccination status. We will do all that is reasonably possible to keep safe everyone who comes to church: there will be **social distancing, hand sanitising, no singing**, etc.

3. STAGE THREE – WHEN 90% ARE EXPECTED TO BE FULLY VACCINATED – 1 DECEMBER 2021 – “THE NEW NORMAL”

The Government has advised that from 1 December there will be no difference between the Covid safety requirements for all NSW citizens, whether fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or unvaccinated. The key requirement for churches will be the **2sqm rule at all indoor religious gatherings**. There will be **no limit on the numbers at outdoor Mass events. Masks will not be required** inside a church, although people may wish to wear a mask for added protection. We will also offer particular care to those faithful who, though fully vaccinated, are anxious about congregating with a mixed congregation. It is likely that further details and clarifications of this new normal will be developed in due course.

Please feel free to call me on 9743 1017 should you have any queries. Peace and Joy,

Fr Thomas Stevens
Parish Priest

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