

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON
GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY
IN THE COVID-19 PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

1. Priests: Mass and ministry for people who are unvaccinated

- Priests are not obliged to celebrate Mass or provide other ministry for people who are unvaccinated.
- In deciding whether to celebrate Mass or provide ministry for unvaccinated people, priests are to take serious account of their own health circumstances and sense of comfort.
- Only fully vaccinated priests are to celebrate public Masses and provide ministry.
- Priests over 70 years of age are not expected to provide ministry to unvaccinated people.
- Priests providing Masses and ministry to the unvaccinated are to ensure stringent safety precautions are in place, to ensure their own safety and that of others.

2. Safety precautions for Masses, funerals and other parish gatherings WITHOUT VACCINE PASSES

- The 10, 50 or 100-person limits (depending on the level) must be strictly observed. This limit includes the priest.
- Both vaccinated and unvaccinated people may attend a restricted number gathering where vaccine passes are not required.
- Parishes must have a system for containing numbers at restricted number Vigil and Sunday Masses, and to avoid turning people away at the church door.
- Social distancing of at least 1m, and preferably 1.5-2m must be observed.
- The church is to be well-ventilated.
- All participants must wear masks, and only remove them briefly to receive communion. Children at Year 4 and above must wear masks.
- There are to be no altar servers, only one reader, and the priest processes in and out alone.
- There is to be no holy water in fonts, communion is to be under one kind and only in the hand, and the sign of peace is to be contactless.
- Great care must be taken in the distribution of communion.
- There is to be no singing.
- Notices or talks after communion are to be avoided.
- People are to leave quickly and the priest should lead by example.
- Other gatherings without vaccine passes are to be avoided.
- The instructions of the funeral director are to be followed for all stages of a funeral.

3. Safety precautions for Masses, funerals and other parish gatherings WITH VACCINE PASSES

- In accord with government requirements vaccine passes must be checked at the entry to the church.
- Even though there are no restrictions on numbers, overflowing congregations are to be avoided.
- The church should be well-ventilated.
- There is to be no singing.
- People are to be reminded that although they are vaccinated, they need to observe basic safety precautions, such as not coming to Mass if even slightly unwell.
- Participants are to wear masks, and the priest should lead by example.
- There is to be no holy water in fonts, communion is to be under one kind and only in the hand, and the sign of peace is to be contactless.

4. Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Parishes are to set up a safe space for Reconciliation for vaccinated and unvaccinated people, and may consider separate locations if needed.
- The space used for Reconciliation is to be well-ventilated.
- Precautions are to be taken to protect the priest and he must be comfortable with those precautions.
- Masks must be worn by the priest and penitent.
- People waiting for Reconciliation are to be socially distanced and wear masks whether vaccinated or not.

5. Baptisms

- The government's rules applying to gatherings must be observed and planned for.
- The names and vaccination status of all those who will be attending are to be recorded and made available to the priest/baptism prep team prior to the Baptism.
- If all those attending are fully vaccinated, vaccine passes must be checked.
- If unvaccinated people are attending, numbers are restricted and social distancing must be observed by all participants, vaccinated or not.
- If the parents are unvaccinated, they are to discuss with the priest how the Baptism can be carried out safely.
- The priest may choose not to carry out the Baptism if the parents are unvaccinated. If large numbers of the potential participants are unvaccinated, he may require that the baptism is conducted only with the parents and godparents.

6. Weddings

- The same rules and safety precautions for Masses are to be in place for weddings, which may be with vaccine passes or with restricted numbers and no vaccine passes.