

Dear Parishioners of St Joseph's, Upper Hutt

Last Friday we started the traffic light system that the government requires all the citizens of NZ to follow. We are grateful for what the Lord has provided for us through the government. As St Paul said *"The civil authority is God's servant to do you good"* (Roman 13.4).

Today I want to thank you all for your peaceful and prayerful acceptance of our current way of entering the Church. I know that having to register for the limited number Mass and having your vaccine pass checked is not easy for everyone but your willingness to co operate has made the transition so much easier.

In thanking all of you I would especially like to mention the volunteers who have put themselves in the front line at the door. Without them we couldn't have Mass. They have had to deal with some harsh and obstructive criticism at the door from people when all they are trying to do is help us to celebrate Mass in a way to keep us all safe from the pandemic. Our volunteers have also come under criticism for their ways of dealing with these people. There is no justification for this criticism as all they are doing is helping people enter the Church peacefully.

Thanks to these volunteers, we are able to have masses for the unvaccinated as well as vaccinated parishioners. When people protest against these rules they make it harder for everyone to attend Mass. Because of our volunteers we are all still able to celebrate eucharist as members of St Joseph's Parish united in faith and love.

We are still in need of a lot more volunteers, especially over the Christmas Holidays so that we can continue to celebrate Mass. Please contact Barbara in the parish office if you are able to be put on the roster for any weekday or weekend Masses. Your help is very much needed.

Sickness has the power to divide the community but as we keep praying according to the different gifts of faith, then Jesus heals. He not only heals us of our sickness but he also gives us greater gifts of love and unity.

My dear parishioners, we your priests, would like to wish you all a happy Advent season.

Fr Maleko Tufuga