



Welcome to 2022 and the **ORANGE Level** and sorry if you receive this more than once.

We now have cases of Omicron in the community. I think we all knew that this was coming, and we now need to ensure that we keep

← ourselves and others as safe as possible. The Government has moved the country to LEVEL **ORANGE** and with the move COVID requirements around gatherings have been changed.

The most significant impact for us, as a faith community, of this move to **ORANGE**, is that attendance limits on the number who can attend faith-based events have changed and appropriate social distancing has been retained. Attendance limits have been removed under **ORANGE** for faith-based events and other such gatherings

ALL MASSES IN OUR LADY OF THE VALLEYS – no maximum attendance level mandated. However the building capacity of St Francis Xavier and Our Lady of Grace Churches (with social distancing still being encouraged) limits attendance to approximately 200 per Mass.

We have heard from Cardinal John, and he has given us some guidelines to help us manage the challenges ahead of us, in a way which is sustainable to everyone. Cardinal John has asked us to remind everyone that.

- *the dispensation from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass is still in place.*
- *you should not come to Mass if they have any cold or flu-like or other symptoms.*
- *you must obey the rules around isolating – if you are waiting for a test result or are a contact of an infected person, please stay at home to limit the possible spread of the virus.*
- *if you are coming to Mass, you must wear a mask, practice hand hygiene and be very aware of social distancing.*
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The usual precautions will continue with Masses, no holy water, communion under one kind and only in the hand.

Cardinal John has given permission to allow congregational singing but please continue to wear a mask.

The Sunday Offertory Collection and Offertory Processions have been re-instated

He has also advised that if a priest is sick or must isolate, the Masses he is scheduled for should be cancelled as finding a replacement would be unrealistic.

What does this mean for us here at Our Lady of the Valleys Parish?



WEEKDAY MASSES (Tuesday to Saturday morning)

No restrictions on entry other than the maximum capacity of the building. We are not expecting this to be an issue as we usually have less than that each day. Previous expectations mask wearing and appropriate social distancing continue.

SUNDAY MASSES (Saturday Vigil 5:30pm and Sunday 8:30 and 10:30 am)

As the only limitation on attendance is the capacity of the building (while maintaining appropriate social distancing, the current level of attendance at regular Sunday Masses indicates that there should not be a problem with the maximum building capacity being exceeded.

Noting the continued dispensation from the Sunday obligation offered in these challenging times, parishioners who feel vulnerable or uncomfortable in a large congregation more than welcome to attend the weekday Masses being offered in both churches. Online Masses continue to be stream from a variety of sources both in New Zealand and overseas which continue to provide some spiritual comfort and allow online participation with a Sunday Mass.

General Summary and Comments

- Masks must be always worn during the Mass. If you have an exemption from wearing a mask, then you must produce proof from a doctor. The latest advice is that masks will play a big part in protecting us and help slow down the spread of this infection. Please don't put volunteers in the position where they need to ask you to put on a mask.
- You will note that the signage on pews ends of every alternative row. This is to ensure that keep you correctly spaced from people not in your bubble. Please only sit in the indicated rows.
- Communion will only be given in the hand, and this will be given to you at your seat by a Eucharistic Minister (no queuing for Communion) Leaving alternative rows empty helps to facilitate the distribution of Holy Communion As they approach you, please stand, hold out your hand and once you have received the host, remove your mask consume it, and then please put your mask back on immediately.
- Please remain in the pews throughout Mass
- Sanitising at the end of each service is suspended

We ask parishioners for their understanding and patience as we make these changes. As always things are constantly changing in this COVID area and setting and the way we celebrate Mass together as a community may be change. We will endeavour to keep you up to date with the changes and how they may affect parishioners.

In all these times remember that whatever the times ahead present to us we are always in the hands and care of our Loving God.

Please feel free to contact the Presbytery on 04 972 4282 if you would like more information around the effect of these **TRAFFIC LIGHT ORANGE** settings and the Parish's response.

Faithfully

Father Tony