



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

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To Priests of the Diocese of Auckland

Re: Masses at Covid-19 'Traffic Light' System

Dear Brother Priests

The Prime Minister has confirmed that Auckland (and the rest of New Zealand) is likely to move into the 'Traffic Light' system for managing the Covid-19 pandemic after Cabinet meets on Monday 29 November. The indications are that we will move to the **RED** phase (see table below) on **Wednesday 1 December**.

What does the traffic light system mean for church gatherings?

Here's a simple table:

Traffic light	With 'My Vaccine Pass'	Without 'My Vaccine Pass'
RED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gatherings up to 100 people / 1m distancingRecord keeping / scanning requiredFace coverings recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gatherings up to 10 peopleRecord keeping / scanning requiredFace coverings recommended
ORANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gatherings of unlimited peopleRecord keeping / scanning requiredFace coverings encouraged	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gatherings up to 50 people / 1m distancingRecord keeping / scanning requiredFace coverings encouraged
GREEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gatherings of unlimited peopleRecord keeping / scanning requiredFace coverings encouraged indoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gatherings up to 100 people / 1m distancingRecord keeping / scanning requiredFace coverings encouraged indoors

From that date, we will be able to welcome for Mass up to 100 people who have a 'My Vaccine Pass' (i.e. vaccination certificate), but gatherings for those who have not been able to be vaccinated will be restricted to just 10 people.

From past experience, we imagine that all parishes will resume weekday Masses for those **who have been vaccinated** and most parishes will also be open for Sunday Masses.

Parishes where numbers on Sunday make a maximum of 100 impractical may like to encourage parishioners to come instead on a weekday and to attend an online Mass or the Shine TV Sunday Mass as an alternative.

For parishioners **who have not been able to be vaccinated** (for whatever reason), it may be worth canvassing parishioners to see what numbers are involved in your parish. If they are low, you may opt to offer one or more weekday Masses for those who are not vaccinated with just 10 people present during this RED phase. If greater numbers wish to attend these Masses, you may need to wait until the lights turn ORANGE when up to 50 unvaccinated would be able to attend this Mass and the numbers for those with a 'My Vaccine Pass' will be unrestricted.

If your own health situation is vulnerable, please do not feel any obligation to celebrate this Mass for those who are not vaccinated but perhaps direct them to a neighbouring parish where such a Mass is available.

It would be good to be planning now for the end of November. Our presumption would be that the usual weekday and Sunday Mass times would be for those with a 'My Vaccine Pass'.

It would be a kindness, where there is a demand and if you have the energy, to schedule one or two Masses each week for those who have not been able to be vaccinated and who therefore do not have the 'My Vaccine Pass'.

After the long lockdown period, many parents are anxious to have their baby baptised. Our suggestion at this time would be that such baptisms be done individually with just family and friends present rather than with a larger group.

For any who want assistance in downloading their 'My Vaccine Pass', Birgitte Reinen (Clergy Healthcare Co-Ordinator) is happy to help if required. Otherwise contact one of your more tech-savvy parishioners or a priest in your Deanery who is able to do it for you.

Either Bishop Michael or I hope to meet with each Deanery during the coming week to hear your plans for reopening once the traffic lights turn RED. Such a meeting might be a helpful opportunity to ask questions or share ideas to help one another as we prepare to start our Advent journey.

With every blessing

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✠ Patrick Dunn
Bishop of Auckland

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✠ Michael Gielen
Auxiliary Bishop of Auckland