



# *Our Lady of the Rosary Parish*

*Church:* 18 Vine Street  
Fairfield NSW 2165  
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## **Religious Gatherings During Stage 1 of Recovery**

Ever since March this year, the Archbishop of Sydney the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher, OP instructed Parish Priests that the only people who could attend religious gatherings are people who are directly assisting with the ceremony. Now, in Stage 1 of the recovery, the Government is currently allowing ten people to attend religious gatherings, not including those who are assisting with the ceremony. Additionally, each place of worship must keep a register of attendees. To protect your anonymity, when recording your contact details, no reference regarding why you are attending the church will be made. The purpose of the register is to contain the spread of the Coronavirus. Ultimately, if someone in attendance contracts COVID-19, NSW Health will be able to notify you so you can take appropriate measures.

Therefore, you are required to contact the Parish Secretary to register your name, phone number, mailing address, and email each time you want to enter the church for Mass, private prayer, or the Sacrament of Reconciliation on 9724 5997 or [admin@olfairfield.org.au](mailto:admin@olfairfield.org.au). Bookings can now also be made for the Sacrament of Baptism.

Only people who reside in Fairfield Parish, or have been regularly attending Mass in this Parish prior to the pandemic, are able to register for any religious gatherings in this church. Exceptions will be made for visitors who attend a Baptism, Wedding, or Funeral. People who gather for a Baptism or Wedding are limited to ten; whereas, the Government is currently allowing 20 people to gather for a Funeral, not including the people who are directly assisting with the ceremony. As for the regular weekday and Sunday Masses, if a family has many children, no more than four children in that family can come to a particular Mass so that other parishioners are afforded the opportunity to register to attend Mass.

The first public Mass during Stage 1 will be the Vigil Mass for the Ascension of the Lord on Saturday 23 May at 6 pm. Masses on Sunday 24 May will be celebrated at 9:00 and 10:30 am and 6:00 pm. Weekday Masses will take place Monday to Friday at 7:00 pm. Public Masses cannot be celebrated prior to 23 May, as time is required to plan all the strategies that need to be managed in accord with the Government's instructions. Effectively, more planning is required to open the church for only ten attendees than for hundreds of people due to the Government's current requirements, as volunteers are required to carry out the following essential duties:

1. • register attendees at a registration table at the door of the church;
2. provide security;
3. be ushers to direct the faithful to the limited seats available in the church;
4. read the Scripture readings;
5. serve as an acolyte;

6. sing as a chorister or cantor; and
7. • be trained to sanitise the church after each time the faithful gather for worship.

If you want to volunteer for any of these duties, unlike the faithful who simply want to attend Mass, rather than contact the Parish Secretary, you must register with the Liturgy Coordinator Philip Pham at: [info@phamlawyers.com.au](mailto:info@phamlawyers.com.au) or 0433 165 160. Please note that if not enough volunteers register for these duties for any specific Mass, that Mass will not be celebrated in the church.

I strongly recommend that if you are seventy years of age or older, you wait until the Coronavirus is more contained before coming to the church. The 9:00 am Sunday Masses and all the weekday 7:00 pm Masses will be live-streamed for the benefit of those who want to continue to self-isolate. The Archbishop is continuing to dispense Catholics from their obligation to attend Mass on Sunday, as he is aware that with the current restrictions, not everyone can come to the church. This dispensation still requires all Catholics to keep the Sabbath Day holy by alternative means if you do not come to the church, such as watching a live-streamed Mass, meditating on Scripture, or praying the Rosary.

All the bookings for the use of the Parish's facilities which were made prior to the pandemic by the various communities and groups in the Parish have been cancelled. If the leaders of each community and group want to book the church or any of the Parish's rooms, these leaders must make a new booking with the Parish Office. Additionally, these leaders will need to make their own arrangements to ensure that: the number of people who attend are limited to ten; the names and contact details of attendees are registered for each gathering; a person is nominated to provide security; and volunteers attend a training session to sanitise run by the Parish.

Your patience is appreciated as we seek to set all these requirements in place in order to abide by the Government's directives. As we do so, I assure you of my prayers for you and your family.

**Father Michael de Stoop**

*Parish Priest*

