



St Dominic's Parish

816 Riversdale Road, Camberwell Vic 3124

T (03) 9912 6870

www.stdominics.org.au

ABN: 84 821 310 940

COVID GUIDELINES EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

1. General Principles

When Ministers are distributing Holy Communion, at Mass or in a private home, the Parish expects that our volunteers will:

- act responsibly to minimise the risk of Covid infection to themselves and the people to whom they administer communion,
- follow Covid directives issued by the Victorian Government. Under the Current Directive for worker vaccination requirements, volunteers in Nursing Homes need to be vaccinated. This is monitored by each Nursing Home. The parish does not monitor vaccination status.
- assess their health for Covid symptoms prior to performing their volunteer role, and,
- follow hand hygiene procedures that are in place.

Masks: Given the concerns of elderly parishioners attending Mass ministers are invited to wear masks when distributing Holy Communion, unless they are unable to wear them.

Symptomatic: When any symptoms of Covid are present volunteers should advise that they are not able to attend the Church to fulfil their role. These symptoms may include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, or other flu-like symptoms.

Tested Positive: Volunteers who have tested positive to COVID in the last seven (7) days, or who are awaiting the results of a COVID test, should not distribute Holy Communion.

Household Contacts are described by the Victorian Government as having spent “more than four hours with someone who has COVID-19 inside a house, accommodation or care facility”. The Parish expects that volunteers who are “household contacts” follow any restrictions that are in place which restrict them from visiting hospitals and aged care facilities. They are required by the Parish not to distribute Holy Communion at Mass or in private homes or facilities while subject to these restrictions.

Underlying Conditions: Volunteers who are concerned about underlying health conditions should consult with their General Practitioner about their vaccination level and any special precautions they should take in performing their duties.

Rosters: Volunteers who are unable to distribute Holy Communion due to any of the above Covid-related reasons are asked to act promptly to organise a swap with another volunteer on the roster. If this is not possible, either due to ill health or shortness of time, please contact:

Parish Office: (03) 9912 6870

Bob Solly: 0411 203 772

or as a last resort advise the Priory: (03) 9912 6880 (ext. 300).



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2. Residential Care (Nursing Home) Visits

In accordance with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's advice, access to Residential Care Facilities is by arrangement with each facility. Extraordinary Ministers need to meet the requirements of the facility itself and the Victorian Government regulation, which may include:

- proof of up-to-date Covid and Flu Vaccination,
- a mask and or shield to be worn during the visit,
- Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) prior to entry, and
- answers to screening questions about symptoms or contact with covid.

EMHCs will be advised of the requirements of the facility which they volunteer to visit, and the documentation needed by the facility.

3. Visiting Private Residences

3.1 Measures

Prior to visiting, Extraordinary Ministers will be asked to take a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) prior to visiting a private residence as they would to visit residents in a Residential Care facility.

Extraordinary Ministers must not visit if they feel unwell. The use of a N95 mask is recommended to provide a higher level of protection to the Extraordinary Minister and person visited. A kit containing RATs, N95 masks, and hand sanitiser is available in the sacristy for those visiting private residences.

When visiting, social distancing of (1.5 metres) should be observed, excepting the need for a short period of closer contact for administering Holy Communion. The location in the home should be well ventilated where possible. Hand sanitisation should be used before entering and when leaving the home, as well as prior to administering Holy Communion. Physical contact with surrounds in the home should be kept to the minimum. The visit time should be less than 15 minutes and hospitality should not normally be accepted at this stage.

3.2 Procedure

Persons requesting a visit will be advised that in line with the Government guidelines the parish does not monitor the vaccination status of any volunteers and that information is private to them. We focus on the current condition of our volunteers and ask them to have a RAT to indicate they are not Covid positive. They are also recommended to wear N95 masks, use hand sanitiser, and keep social distancing at 1.5 metres to the extent possible.

The four standard screening questions below will be asked, along with other essential information (name, address, phone and alternative contact, access, other risks including pets):



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1. Are you experiencing any of these health symptoms: fever, chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, or loss of smell or taste?
2. Have you tested positive for covid in the last seven (7) days?
3. Does anyone in your house have covid or have you in the last seven (7) days spent more than four (4) hours with someone who has covid inside a house, accommodation, or care facility?
4. Are you waiting for results from a covid test?

The Parish Office must be notified of any change in the answers to these questions. If others are to be present during a visit, they will also need to answer these questions. If the answer to any of these questions is yes, the visit will be rescheduled.

The person will be asked if they have any difficulty in swallowing, so that the Extraordinary Minister is aware in advance.

Victorian Government Covid information can be found at: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/>

Fr Paul Rowse, OP
Parish Priest

20 October 2022