

Our Lady of Fatima Parish

103 Fernleigh Road
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
Email: olofparishsouthwagga@gmail.com
P (02) 6925 2111



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Dear Parishioners and friends of Our Lady of Fatima Parish

It is now nearly six weeks since I last wrote to you and eight weeks since we celebrated our last weekend masses at our parish church together. Easter has come and gone. Like all of you, I have been missing the time we spent together praying, celebrating the sacraments and supporting one another. I know that many of you are missing Holy Communion—so central to our lives of faith. As a parish, we have been gathering personal details so that we can share our weekly bulletin and other resources with you. The parish bulletin can be accessed through the website www.olof.waggamatters.com. We have been celebrating Sunday masses and posting them to our Facebook page—**OLOF South Wagga**. I hope you have appreciated the addition of the recently deceased parishioners photos and details at the beginning of the service. I want to publicly thank Greg Robertson, Catherine Malone and Leanne McInerney for supporting these weekly productions. So many of you have found watching mass from our parish church (as opposed to the many other online options) so comforting at this time. It has been incredibly hard to keep the church shut during this period when people wanted to go to the church to pray. Fr Anto and his Syro-Malabar community have had the same challenges as all of us.

In response to the 'flattening' of the COVID-19 curve, the Government is allowing us to open our churches again with serious limitations. There can only be **10** people in there at the one time. Hand sanitizer will be available as people come into the church. Prayers will be required to keep 1.5m distancing. Until everybody downloads the Covidsafe app on their phones, people coming into the church need to sign into the church as they enter. The number of people who can attend a funeral in a church/chapel has increased from 10 to 20 and if the funeral is held at the graveside, the new limit is 30 mourners. This is good news for us all.

The government is also allowing us to celebrate public mass again—with a serious limitation of only 10 people! I will **not** be restarting Sunday masses at Our Lady of Fatima until a larger number than 10 can be present. It is too hard to limit those who want to attend to 10 and how do you select who comes? Until the number who can attend increases to a reasonable number for us (say 100), we will still be pre-recording our masses and sharing on our Facebook page. If we all behave ourselves (including downloading the Covidsafe app) and there are no outbreaks in the COVID-19 virus, we should be able to anticipate the Government allowing us a larger congregation in the future. **We will inform you as soon as we are able to recommence Sunday masses!**

I have been humbled by the financial support the parish has received during this eight week period. Our parishioners have been very generous in giving to the parish and I want to thank you for your individual contribution. We have held our collections which I did not expect. I have come to a new appreciation of the widows' mite.

Please be assured of our continued prayers for you at this time and please do not hesitate to contact the parish for any assistance

Fr Paddy Sykes, Parish Priest.