

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

I bring you good news of great joy! Our church will reopen this weekend (**4/5 July**) for Sunday Masses at the usual times! It is hard to believe that it is 15 weeks since we last gathered in our church together for Sunday Eucharist! Although weekday Masses have been celebrated first with 10 people, then with 20, and finally 50 people, the Sunday Masses have not been possible. There is still a restriction of **4 sq m** per parishioner which means that we can have only **90** people at each of our three Sunday Masses. When the government reduces the distancing to **2 sq m**, then we will be able to have double the number of people. It is hard to predict what will happen in the future, as the COVID-19 situation in Victoria at present reminds us. We are monitoring the situation very closely and following government regulations in relation to opening up Our Lady of Fatima church. I want to thank those parishioners who helped with the on-line masses; organists Leanne McInerney and Sharon Froom, cantor Catherine Malone and all round technical support Greg Robertson. I am sure you will agree they did an amazing job and it kept us all connected as a parish during the lockdown. An average of 440 people viewed the on-lines masses during that time.

The Bishops of Australia have temporarily suspended the traditional Catholic Sunday Obligation. That means that you do **NOT** have to come to Mass on Sunday to satisfy your spiritual and religious obligations. It is acceptable to attend a weekday Mass, watch Mass on the television or recite the rosary at home to fulfil your obligation to Sunday Mass. You should, however, **NOT** come to any public Masses if you are unwell or experiencing flu like symptoms.

Coming to church has changed a lot since we last came together for weekend Mass. Welcomers will greet you as you arrive to show you what to do. You are required to sign in and then use hand sanitiser that will be provided for you. The Welcomers will then show you to your seat in the church. Communion will be with the host only (not the Precious Blood), be received on the hand **ONLY** and you will need to practice social distancing as you approach the altar for communion. There will be no offertory procession and no collections. Parishioners are encouraged to make a donation to the church either electronically, or by the PayWave terminal in the church. Buckets will be available at the entrance to the church for those who wish to leave envelopes or cash. Please leave the church in an orderly fashion, respecting the social distance guidelines.

Thank you for your continued strong financial support of our parish during this COVID-19 time. The parishioners have been very generous in giving to the parish and I want to thank you for your individual and collective generosity.

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

Fr Paddy Sykes
Parish Priest