



*A letter to the Clergy in the Diocese of Broken Bay*

Wednesday 29 September 2021

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

As you are aware the NSW Government has now published its “Roadmap” from the current COVID restrictions. Broadly, this is envisaged in three segments:

1. From the Monday after 70% vaccination rate has been achieved (forecast to be Monday 11 October) various enterprises may open, including places of public worship, and be available for those who are vaccinated.
2. From the Monday after 80% vaccination rate has been achieved, further venues can reopen for those who are vaccinated. Places of public worship are exempt from this particular restriction.
3. 1 December 2021 when COVID vigilance applies to all, irrespective of vaccination status.

The full details of the “80 per cent roadmap” can be found in this [fact sheet](#).

Considering this roadmap and all its implications for the Faithful of Broken Bay, I have determined the following to apply to our own diocese:

1. From Monday 11 October our churches are to be reopened for private prayer and devotion **only**. It is for our people to be mindful of government requirements for this stage of the Roadmap and to engage this opportunity with a sense of responsibility and COVID safety. During this stage:
  - a. The hours of opening of our churches should be available to our parishioners.
  - b. Public Masses remain suspended and “private” Masses with a congregation should not take place. The exception will be the Mass of Ordination at Our Lady of Rosary Cathedral on 18 October and the subsequent three Masses of Thanksgiving for our newly ordained priests.
  - c. Confessions should not be publicly scheduled but most certainly should be available by personal arrangement with the clergy of the parish.
  - d. Baptisms, unless in the event of impending death, should be delayed until the next stage.
  - e. Weddings and funerals: up to 50 people may attend. These need to be vaccinated.

**MOST REVEREND ANTHONY RANDAZZO BISHOP OF BROKEN BAY**

PO Box 340, Pennant Hills NSW 1715, Australia P +612 8379 1614 E [bishop@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:bishop@bbcatholic.org.au)

[www.bbcatholic.org.au](http://www.bbcatholic.org.au)



- f. Those who are unvaccinated may only attend weddings with a maximum number of 5 people.
  - g. Those who are unvaccinated may only attend funeral with a maximum number of 10 people.
  - h. It is essential that anyone visiting our churches use the QR code to register their visit, sanitize, and always wear a mask.
2. From the Monday after 80% vaccination rate has been achieved, public Masses are to resume in all our churches according to their usual schedule. In accord with the government regulation, the vaccination status of our people who attend our churches, or who undertake a ministry in them, will not need to be verified. Thankfully, this will enable us to go forward together as one community of the Church. As they engage this opportunity, it will be important for our people to make informed decisions about their COVID safety. During this stage:
- a. Other rituals such as Baptisms and other services of prayer and devotion may be resumed.
  - b. Confessions should be publicly scheduled again.
  - c. The number of people who can attend Mass and other liturgies and services of prayer is based on the 4 sqm principle (uncapped), including for funerals and weddings.
  - d. Congregational singing will not be possible, but a musician and cantor are possible and should be engaged for the beauty of the liturgy.
  - e. COVID safe practices related to the celebration of our liturgies should be re-introduced including:
    - i. Avoiding the handling of objects by multiple persons;
    - ii. The Chalice is not to be shared; Holy Communion for the Faithful is to be under one species only;
    - iii. The Sign of Peace should only be given by a simple bow or nod of the head.
    - iv. Those who wish to receive Holy Communion on the tongue should be asked to wait until the end of the Communion Procession and the priest should sanitize his hands after each of these communicants.
  - f. It is essential that anyone visiting our churches use the QR code to register their visit, sanitize, and always wear a mask.

Given that our parish facilities other than our church buildings will be subject to the status of people's vaccination it may be that parishes continue to suspend face-to-face parish meetings, social gatherings, and use of facilities such meeting rooms and halls until after 1 December, and that parishes continue to encourage online



gatherings. Should parish facilities be opened during this stage, they will be subject to the vaccination status of those who use them, and the 4 sqm principle.

3. From 1 December 2021

- a. Density for gatherings in our churches will shift to one person per 2 sqm for both indoor and outdoor gatherings.
- b. Congregational singing will be possible at our liturgies.
- c. There is no restriction on the use of other parish facilities such as meeting rooms and halls.

Our Diocesan Financial Administrator, Emma McDonald will advise you in the coming days about the implications of the NSW Roadmap for our parish offices and our parish staff.

The last months have been very difficult for our people and ourselves. Again, I express my gratitude to you for the many creative pastoral means by which you have supported the people entrusted to your pastoral care during this challenging period. I now welcome the NSW Government's roadmap, and particularly the understanding it has demonstrated for places of public worship. I am confident that the staged return I have outlined, in accord with both the spiritual needs of our people and the Roadmap, will ensure our safety and our unity as we journey forward together into the new environment ahead of us.

Should you have any questions please raise them with Fr David, my Vicar General or with Kelly Paget, my Chancellor so that the Chancery may be able to offer further clarifications as we commence each of the three stages I have outlined.

Fraternally yours,

Most Rev Anthony Randazzo DD JCL  
Bishop of Broken Bay