

Instruction
On Actions and Precautions to be Observed in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
During the COVID-19 Pandemic Event

1/2020

The Need for an Instruction

The arrival of COVID-19, also known as Novel Coronavirus 2019, in the community of Australia has been recognised by secular authorities as presenting a continuing danger to public health. Efforts are continuing to eliminate, mitigate, or otherwise control the spread of COVID-19 within the Australian community, and these efforts have required the enactment of regulatory requirements in all of the civil jurisdictions within the Commonwealth of Australia. In the State of New South Wales these regulatory requirements are contained in Orders made under the *Public Health Act 2010* (NSW).

Civil authorities within the State of New South Wales responsible for the promotion of public health have issued general advice and information to assist members of the community in protecting themselves and the broader community from the dangers presented by COVID-19.

Aspects of these regulatory requirements and general advice have a direct impact on the pastoral and liturgical life of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. It is likely these impacts will exist for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic event, and accordingly require temporary changes to established and customary practices be put in place to protect both members of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and the broader community.

The overall aim of both the regulatory requirements and the general advice from public health authorities has been, and remains, the safety of all residents of the State of New South Wales.

The Instruction

In response to the need to provide clear instruction and advice to the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, the document entitled 'COVID-19 Pandemic Event: Advice, Guidance and Instructions to Parishes' has been prepared to provide a single source of

information to the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and clarity around any required adaptations to established practices.

For the avoidance of confusion:

- Pastors and parishes will comply with any requirement that results from the making of an Order under the *Public Health Act 2010* (NSW);
- Pastors and parishes will comply with any requirement contained in the document entitled 'COVID-19 Pandemic Event: Advice, Guidance and Instructions to Parishes' using language that is prescriptive, e.g. 'will', 'must', 'is to', etc.
- Pastors and parishes will consider any requirement contained in the document entitled 'COVID-19 Pandemic Event: Advice, Guidance and Instructions to Parishes' using language that is permissive, e.g. 'should', 'may', 'consider', etc., and make determinations for the local community that is in keeping with the overall aim of ensuring the safety of parishioners and the broader community.

Exhortation

The advent of COVID-19 in the Australian community places the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle in unusual circumstances. Called to play our part in the broader efforts to eliminate, mitigate or otherwise control the spread of COVID-19 across the community, the Diocese is required to amend and adapt its pastoral and liturgical life in order to do so.

The temporary adaptations and changes required a generous response on the part of believers. In addition to our continued prayers for all those who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic event, I commend these instructions to you.

This Instruction has an effective date of 24 August 2020 nothing the contrary withstanding, and abrogates all previous instructions.

Given at Hamilton, NSW, on the 24th day of August 2020.



Rev Andrew Doohan VG

Vicar General