

MEDIA RELEASE



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Archbishop Fisher urges faithful to return to Mass as COVID restrictions ease

The Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP has issued a new Pastoral Letter, just weeks away from Christmas, urging the faithful to return to Mass now that COVID-19 restrictions have eased in NSW.

Under changes introduced on 7 December, places of worship are allowed unlimited attendance numbers at services as long as a two square metre is observed. The rule applies to both indoor and outdoor services.

Archbishop Fisher has asked Catholic parishes to schedule more Masses than usual and a mix of in-church, in-bigger-hall and outdoor Masses, where possible, especially to accommodate larger Christmas congregations.

In his new Pastoral Letter, *Come Home to Mass!*, Archbishop Fisher has indicated that all Catholics are now expected to attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days such as Christmas again, unless they are elderly, have health conditions or are otherwise anxious about the risks of the coronavirus.

“The COVID-19 pandemic and public health orders have hit the faiths hard. Churches were closed for a time, then reopened with only a third to half our normal congregations. Many joined Mass by live-streaming and some donated online. But others fell away and collections fell dramatically. Now it is time to return to normal”, Archbishop Fisher said.

“But it will be a new normal. There may be further outbreaks and so we must continue to be vigilant and to pray for an end to the pandemic.”

Archbishop Fisher said he hoped the lead-up to Christmas would be a time of great spiritual hope and renewal for Catholics, who may not have been to Mass for some time because of COVID-19 restrictions.

“In coming back to Church, we are returning to God’s house and ours, the entrance hall to our eternal home. Christmas is coming! Please plan to include Mass in your Christmas celebrations. Plan to bring with you some people who are less regular attenders. At last we will be able to sing carols again. At last we can celebrate the greatest of all Christmas gifts: God-made-baby for us!”, Archbishop Fisher concluded.

You’ll find a full copy of Archbishop Anthony Fisher’s Pastoral Letter here: : https://cdn-au.mailsnd.com/31529/j8jPMUTwIjLE7QRzCP80PneJfKuWV4BglyKpQ_guqSM/3255211.pdf

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