



WHEN WE CAN'T GO TO MASS

PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH WHILE PUBLIC MASS IS SUSPENDED

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are currently unable to attend Mass. During this time, we encourage you to continue your life of prayer and participation in the life of the Church despite the challenges we face. This page seeks to provide guidance to Catholics in the Diocese of Palmerston North in their participation in the life of the Church while public Mass is suspended.

What is a dispensation from Mass?

A dispensation from a diocesan bishop releases Catholics from fulfilling their Sunday obligation of attending Mass. In a letter dated 20 March 2020, Cardinal John Dew has written that since public Masses are suspended in the Diocese until further notice, all Catholics in the Diocese are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass (Canon 1248). Many people may feel sadness at not being able to participate in the Mass, but you should not feel guilty for not going to Mass.

What should I do if I can't go to mass?

At this time, as public Mass has been suspended until further notice, we encourage you to pray in other ways. As Cardinal John Dew has said in his letter to us, *"for each of us personally there may be opportunities for discerning what is really essential in our spiritual journey; for finding a new appreciation of those who are very familiar; and for deepening our prayer and the ways we pray."*

You may like to reflect on and pray with the Scriptures (particularly the Mass readings), pray the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, making an Act of Spiritual Communion (see below) and participate in Mass online (see more below).

How can I participate in Mass online?

Despite our current limitations, we can still participate in the celebration of Mass online thanks to modern technology. Many dioceses around the world provide online streaming of Masses, including our own Diocese of Palmerston North. Below are some links to online Masses. We also encourage you to think about how you might help those homebound and less tech-savvy to be able to access Mass online during this time.

1. The Cathedral of the Holy Spirit

Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit will be livestreamed each Sunday at 10am and it is also available as a recording on-demand.

Watch here: <https://pndiocese.org.nz/video>

2. Pope Francis' daily Mass

Pope Francis' daily Masses are now available online through the Vatican's website and YouTube channel. They are expected to continue to be available throughout the upcoming weeks.

Watch here: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope-francis/mass-casa-santa-marta.pagelist.html>



What is an Act of Spiritual Communion and how do I make one?

Catholics have long been encouraged to partake in the practice of “spiritual communion” if they are unable to receive the Eucharist for a particular reason (for instance – being homebound). Simply put, it is coming before God in prayer – expressing our deep desire to be united to Him despite the fact that we are unable to be united to Him in receiving the Eucharist. In making an Act of Spiritual Communion we ask the Lord to give us the graces that would come to us if we were able to receive Him sacramentally (Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity). Reciting the below is simple and common way of making an act of Spiritual Communion.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,

I believe that You

are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

SOURCES:

Cardinal John Dew's Letter to Parishioners

<https://pndiocese.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Letter-to-parishioners-PN-Diocese.pdf>

Some content adapted from the Communications Office of the Archdiocese of Melbourne

<https://melbournecatholic.org.au/News/now-what-online-mass-and-other-resources>

