



Wednesday 18 March, 2020

**Letter from the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth
to Parish Priests, Principals, Sacramental Coordinators and Catechists**

**Changes to the Preparation and Celebration of Sacraments for School Aged Children
in the Archdiocese of Perth in relation to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Dear Parish Priests, Principals, Sacramental Coordinators and Catechists.

Celebrations of the Sacraments of Confirmation, Eucharist and Penance for the first time are by their very nature events which bring the faith community together in their local parish. Today, Wednesday 18 March 2020, the Prime Minister has expressly communicated a '*ban on non-essential gatherings of persons of one hundred or greater in indoor areas*'. The government's existing ban on non-essential outdoor gatherings of five hundred persons or greater, which came into effect on Monday 16 March 2020, remains in effect. I commit the Archdiocese of Perth to the support of, and compliance with, both of these government directives and the associated and instructive public health advice.

Given the risks associated with the spread of COVID-19, it is necessary to put in place measures that will protect the health and safety of the community.

I therefore direct that all celebrations of the Sacraments that were planned for 2020 be temporarily suspended. This temporary suspension will also apply to gatherings associated with these celebrations such as parent evenings and workshops.

The teaching of the Religious Education program in schools will continue as planned by the schools with the ongoing support of the Religious Education and Faith Formation team at the Catholic Education Office. Sacramental preparation occurring in the Parish Religious Education Program for children who do not go to Catholic schools will be guided by advice from the Catechist Service.

I appreciate that postponing the celebration of the Sacraments may require considerable planning and the support of all those who are impacted including the families, parishes and schools. I trust that with the collaboration of all involved these temporary measures will reduce health risks to communities in these challenging times.

I assure you of my continued prayers and practical support as together we as an Archdiocese seek to continue to witness and proclaim our Christ-centred hope within a global context that is collectively seeking to respond to the uncertainty and reality of COVID-19.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

**Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth**