

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) actually had to specify that the faithful must receive Communion once a year! That, of course, was not the whole story everywhere.

Frequent Communion increased markedly in the 20th Century. It has become the norm since the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

This may invite us, in our quiet lockdown moments, to reflect upon what a cherished gift the Eucharist is, and how blessed we are.

A renewed appreciation of the gift may be one of the blessings of this lockdown, and provide growth and blessings in our parishes.

**To make your Spiritual Communion, follow the advice of St Alphonsus, and pray:**

*My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire You in my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though You are already there, I embrace You and unite myself wholly to You; do not let me ever be separated from You. Amen.*

The PPCs also discussed the issue of how to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at a 2-metre distance, especially before Mass! This will have to wait for another newsletter.

On to other things. Lots of encouragement to each and all of you, especially if you are finding the lockdown very hard after all this time.

Please God, we will soon be back to a normal life. Please keep reaching out in love and care.

The Readings for this 26th Sunday of the year are available at <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/092621.cfm> .

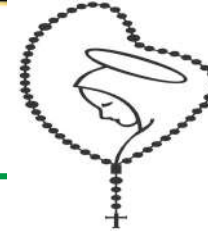
My homily is available at [https://share.icloud.com/photos/0KhX5RUwz\\_mB7ihhJOT7UleXQ](https://share.icloud.com/photos/0KhX5RUwz_mB7ihhJOT7UleXQ)

*God Bless!*  
**Fr John Dunn**

## MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

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**26th SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**  
**Saturday 25 & Sunday 26 September**

Dear Parishioners,

Level 3!! It is good news for the economy, but not much has changed for families except for the takeaways (!! ) School holidays now add to the mix. Keep Smiling and keep ringing someone every day!!

Last Monday 20 September, your Parish Councils met by zoom to discuss our Level 3 situation and Bishop Pat's letter which I outlined last week. So this newsletter will, in large part, be a report from that, plus a few more things.

### **Under Alert Level 3**

We had thought that our churches could be open each day for your private prayer. Later I was informed that under level 3, churches must remain closed. What a pity..

### **Bishop Pat's Letter**

We discussed Bishop Pat's letter which I shared with you last Sunday. His last point is my first: **Please get vaccinated!**

### **The Bishop was clear: No Sunday Masses under Level 2.**

There were mixed feelings about this. The danger of aerosol transmission, plus the limit of 50 people seem to have guided his decision.

As of Monday, no other Bishop had lifted the restriction, given that further south Level 2 now has a limit of 100. Our PPCs asked me to communicate to Bishop our desire to return to Sunday Mass, and I did so on Wednesday.

By then, all Bishops of our other Dioceses except Cardinal Dew had given permission for Sunday Mass to be celebrated under Level 2 (100 people) conditions. Cardinal Dew is waiting until after the next announcement on October 4.

As far as Auckland is concerned, the only problem I see is that when we get to Level 2, it may be restricted to 50. I am sure Bishop Pat will have a further communication after October 4. Watch this space...

Remember, **under level 2, we can have weekday Mass**. Note too, that the Sunday obligation has been removed. A weekday Mass may be your particular blessing.

### **Protocols for when we return to Mass**

The PPCs discussed the protocols required. There were four issues. The first is the obligation to scan the QR code or sign in. Associated with this is the desire to avoid a bottleneck at the entrance to the churches.

We need a number of QR signs to spread people out. Secondly, it was agreed that we put a 'sign-in' form at the bottom of the newsletter, so that people could cut it out, fill it in at home, and then drop it in a box. Business cards would also do. This does not reach those not registered for the newsletter, however. Please check with your friends and encourage those who are not signed up to do so.

Second, the two-metre spacing seems to be the biggest issue. We discussed how to arrange our churches. St Ignatius would struggle to accommodate 100 people under rigid application of this requirement. Mother of Perpetual Help would not. Please remember that family bubbles can come and be alongside one another, as long as they are two metres distant from the next person or bubble.

The PPCs noted that the numbers attending Mass at last year's lockdown did not reach 100. The thought was also offered, in the case that we have more than 100, that some may go to a weekday Mass and give up their presence at Sunday Mass in order to allow someone who can go only on Sunday to come to Mass. Eucharistic hospitality in a strange, new form!! Please note that the Sunday obligation is suspended, and thus weekday Mass is fine.

Third, we noted that the wearing of masks was "strongly recommended". I would expect to see most of us wearing masks, given the danger of aerosol transmission.

Fourth, How do we receive Holy Communion? It was agreed that we need to take our time and cherish the moment after missing out on Mass for so long.

No hurry! We can come forward one row at a time, with two metre spacing, take off our mask, receive Communion, replace our mask and return to our seat.

The practice of the Presence of Christ and Spiritual Communion. How do we walk spiritually and be nourished without Mass? Many will be turning to live streaming of Masses, or Shine on TV. I have heard of lots of recommendations of where to get a 'good Mass'!! Others spend time in prayer with the daily or Sunday readings. But the ancient practice of the Presence of Christ may also help. The risen Jesus Christ never abandons us: he is present in every aspect of our lives. In Matthew 25, he invites us to see him in every person we meet: "I was hungry and you gave me to eat". Last Sunday: "Anyone who welcomes one such child welcomes me." To 'tune in' to our lives, just as they are, to see Christ in us and in those around us during lockdown and to draw them into prayer, is to practice the presence of Christ. One verse in St Patrick's Breastplate sums it up:

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me. Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me, Christ in quiet,  
Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

And in terms of the Liturgy, the Second Vatican Council (SC 7) sums it up: *To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross", but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when one baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).*

You may or may not be familiar with the notion of making a spiritual communion. Many of you will be doing so during online Mass. A little bit of history: For many centuries, from the very early middle ages onwards, this was the only form of Communion for lay people. The bell would ring, and the priest, with his back to the people, would raise the Host high above his head, and the people would bow and make their spiritual communion. This was their Mass.

In large basilicas, there might be many Masses going on at the same time, and the bell would alert the faithful to go to that altar.