



21 September 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Resumption of Sunday Masses

On that first Easter Sunday, the day the Lord rose from the dead, a new hope dawned on humanity. In times of trial and troubles the Christian people of God look to Christ our hope. It is to Him we turn as we seek to navigate the challenges of the current pandemic. Thank you for your patience through these times of changing levels. Thank you to those who found various ways to honour the command to keep the Lord's day holy.

There are two accounts of the Ten Commandments in the Bible. In the book of Exodus we hear the third commandment connected to God's work of creation.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that these hold, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why the Lord has blessed the Sabbath day and made it sacred. (Ex 20:9,11)

The Book of Deuteronomy, connects the third commandment to God's redemptive work of freeing Israel from their slavery in Egypt.

Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy... Remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out from there with mighty hand and outstretched arm; because of this, the Lord your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deut 5:12,15)

God continues to want to redeem and re-create us. That's why he calls us together to celebrate His Eucharist, to hear his word as his one people and to be nourished by the Bread of Heaven. "Do this in memory of me" Jesus commanded us at the Last Supper. This Jewish concept of 'living memorial' makes us partakers of the one saving event of his death and resurrection.

Lockdown has been a time of trial for us as believers as we have been separated from the taonga of the Eucharist. Sunday Mass will resume in the Diocese of Hamilton from this coming Sunday, albeit with the restriction of 100 people at each Mass.

The indoor gathering limit of 100 means we are not going to be able to accommodate everybody across the whole Diocese. Some parishes will have extra Masses. However, given we don't know how long we will remain at Level 2, I have

decided each priest may only offer two Masses per day. Your parish will have details about what Masses are being offered and what, if any, booking system is being used.

For those who are sick or uneasy about returning to Mass immediately, the dispensation from attending Sunday Mass continues. The 10.30am Cathedral Mass will be livestreamed at the following link <https://www.cdh.org.nz/livestream> each Sunday. The Mass is still available to view later in the day. Shine TV continue to screen a Sunday Mass.

Please, abide by the Level 2 regulations which have been put in place for the good of the whole community. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of Charity which unites us and binds us in communion.

Please, if you are unwell, stay at home. If you are vulnerable to the virus, perhaps come to weekday Mass and use other means to keep the Lord's day holy.

Please, wear a mask. Be conscious of those who are afraid of the virus but who want to come to Mass. Your choice should not be causing them unease. Also, be aware, there are a few people who for significant health reasons are unable to wear a mask.

Please scan or sign in. If we do get another outbreak, this information enables the authorities to get on top of the outbreak. We do not want to return to lockdown.

Please, ensure social distancing within your church as well as before and after Mass. Please, do not give grief to those who ensure we do not exceed 100 people at each Mass.

The restrictions of Communion on the hand only, no Communion from the chalice, no singing, no physical contact during the sign of peace and no holy water in the church porches remain.

As we look forward to returning to Sunday Mass let us pray for an end to the pandemic. Let us be grateful that New Zealand has not been impacted in the same way other countries have. Let us continue to work together to ensure the health and well-being of others. And, finally and most importantly, let us not lose sight of Christ our hope who cannot be locked down as he continues to redeem and re-create us.

Yours sincerely in Christ the Good Shepherd

+ *Steve Lowe*

✠ Steve Lowe
BISHOP OF HAMILTON



**TOGETHER
ON THE JOURNEY**
LIVING NO LONGER FOR OURSELVES BUT FOR CHRIST