

# Pastoral Letter

Dear Parishioners,

May the Grace and Peace of Christ be with you. This is a difficult and sensitive time in the church, we are all sons and daughters of God - the vaccinated and those whose vaccination status is unknown. You are all the flock entrusted to my care, and I am your pastor. Hence, this pastoral letter is the most difficult for me to write. People have different views about getting the Covid 19 vaccination, I am vaccinated, but I do respect each person's decision to be vaccinated or not.

However, the current Victorian road map out of lockdown makes a distinction between religious activities participated by those who are fully vaccinated and those whose participants' vaccination status are unknown. I realise that we have already gone through the pain of not being able to worship together due to the lockdown, none-the-less, I want you to see this temporary distinction between the vaccinated and those whose vaccination status are unknown as a sacrifice we as a church are making as the pandemic is mitigated and all Victorians, vaccinated or not are able once again to walk side by side.

Our churches shall reopen this Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B. All the Sunday masses including the Sunday Vigil mass (Saturday evening), shall be celebrated. For this Sunday, bookings shall be required only for the 8.30am mass both in St Francis Xavier's and St John's. Booking shall also be required for the 10.30am and 5.30pm masses at St Francis Xavier Church next Sunday.

In St Francis Xavier's Church, the 6.00pm, (Saturday evening), 10.30am & 5.30pm masses shall be for those who are fully vaccinated, and the 8.30am mass is for those whose vaccination status are unknown. There is a cap of thirty people for those whose vaccination status are unknown, and density quotient of 4msq for the fully vaccinated. Presently, SFX can accommodate eighty people in masses for the fully vaccinated.

On weekdays, (except when advised otherwise), masses on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays shall be for those whose vaccination status are unknown, and Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays shall be for those who are fully vaccinated.

The following masses shall be life streamed: 6.00pm (Saturday evening), 8.30am Sunday, 9.15am Wednesday and Friday. I intend to review the situation in a fortnight.

If you are unable to get into any mass, stay in your car and you will be given communion.

In St John's Church, the 7.00pm, (Saturday evening), and 10.00am masses shall be for those who are fully vaccinated, and the 8.30am mass is for those whose vaccination status are unknown. There is a cap of thirty people for those whose vaccination status are unknown, and density quotient of 4msq for the fully vaccinated. Presently, our church can accommodate one hundred and twenty people who are fully vaccinated.

On weekdays, (except on solemnities), we shall be celebrating masses or Communion services under the category for those whose vaccination status are unknown. The fully vaccinated can participate in the mass, but the participants shall be capped at thirty. I intend to review the situation in a fortnight.

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> of November is All Saints Day. Two masses shall be celebrated in both churches: 8.00am for those whose vaccination status is unknown and 9.00/9.15am for the fully vaccinated.

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> of November is All Souls' Day. Two masses shall also be celebrated: 9.00/9.15am for the fully vaccinated and 7.00pm for those whose vaccination status is unknown.

Please, let us go through this difficult time together, and the Lord will be our strength.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Chinua Okeke CSSp  
Parish Priest  
28.10.21