



**BISHOP'S
OFFICE**

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Dear Fathers,

As we are in now in Delta Alert Level 2 with some additional restrictions, we need to continue to play our part in keeping the community safe. We have seen how easily a church gathering can become a spreader event and the distress this can cause in the community.

I am very grateful for the work you have been doing to keep people safe and feeling connected during Levels 3 and 4. Parishes and groups within parishes are being very creative in their response, and I know that you are all in different ways providing pastoral and spiritual care to the people, as they are to one another.

We do not know how long we will be in Level 2 or whether the increased restrictions in this level might be relaxed a little at a later date while still keeping us in Level 2. Therefore, **these instructions apply in parishes until Tuesday 21 September**, at which point I will communicate with you again:

- There are to be no public Masses or other liturgical events or in-person parish gatherings in the Diocese.
- Churches are to be closed except for funerals, as it is difficult to monitor contact tracing, social distancing, mask wearing, and numbers.
- Funerals can take place with a maximum of 50 people in total, with the required social distancing, contact tracing, and wearing of masks. Funerals can take place in a church, and meetings with the family can take place with observance of the Level 2 requirements. The funeral director's instructions must be followed.

Anecdotally it seems that many people are feeling vulnerable with the high transmissibility of the delta virus, and its presence in Wellington in this outbreak. The high level of compliance with the government's restrictions during this outbreak is another indicator of this personal concern, and also shows that people feel responsible for one another and for the common good of all.

I met with the Council of Priests by Zoom this morning and we discussed all these matters. I will continue to discuss with them matters such as how we will respond if it looks like we are to be in Level 2 for a long period. I will let you know if there are matters which they bring up that might have an effect for everyone.

With all good wishes and every blessing

✠ John A Cardinal Dew
Apostolic Administrator of Palmerston North Diocese

