

What does moving to the COVID-19 Protection Framework (the 'Traffic Light System') mean for our Selwyn Parish?

From Fr Brian:

From Friday, 3 December, the Government is introducing the '*Traffic Light System*' for Covid-19 Protection.

This means that we have to be aware of 2 systems of people congregating – those who possess a 'Vaccine Pass' (they may gather in unlimited crowds), and those who do not possess a 'Vaccine Pass' (they are limited to gatherings of no more than 50 people and keeping social distancing).

Even if some people may feel that the Government's requirements are a bit excessive - we, as a Diocese, and as a Parish, still need to follow the Government's Guidelines.

From this weekend – we therefore need to adapt our mass protocols.

- ❖ **The 5.30pm Vigil Mass and the 8.30am Sunday mass in Lincoln** will be with **parishioners who possess a 'Vaccine Pass'**.

Parishioners need to show their Pass; it just needs to be sighted.

This means that there is **no limit to the number of people attending the mass** and there is **no requirement to maintain social distancing**.

The seating will be returned to its normal arrangement.

We will therefore reintroduce the Collection Baskets being passed around and the Gifts being brought forward.

However, parishioners are still requested to scan the Covid Appt or sign the Register.

If parishioners have not yet received their 'Vaccine Pass', then the 'purple' vaccination form that recorded your vaccination is sufficient.

- ❖ We will retain the **11.00am Sunday Lincoln mass**, for the time being. At this mass, parishioners are **not required to produce a 'Vaccine Pass'**. This mass will be restricted to 50 people and the current social distancing protocol is retained.

If parishioners possess a 'Vaccine Pass', I encourage them to attend one of the other 2 masses at Lincoln. It is back to normal for these masses.

- ❖ The **Leeston 10.00am mass currently has fewer than 50 parishioners** - so this mass can also serve as a 'non-Vaccination Pass' Mass. Social distancing must be maintained. (The local parishioners have their own particular seating arrangements).

- ❖ The **Darfield 8.30am Mass** currently has an attendance of 50-70 parishioners – so until we are able to determine the regular attendance - I believe this mass should be a **'Vaccine Pass' Mass**. I will have a count at mass this Sunday to establish the numbers attending. The system may self-regulate as time goes by.

- ❖ A few parishioners may not be able to attend the mass-time of choice, but there are 2 masses, within the Selwyn Parish, that are available as non-disclosure of a 'Vaccine Pass' masses.

- ❖ **Weekday Masses** throughout the Parish are not a problem - as there are fewer than 50 people at each mass – so there is no need to produce a 'Vaccine Pass'. However, social distancing is still required.

- ❖ As time passes, the 'Traffic Light System' will clarify and settle down.

Fr Chris and I endeavour to be considerate with the mass schedule.

Even if these arrangements may not suit everyone, I also remind parishioners that it also places 'pressure' on me, as the Parish Priest, and the Bishops of New Zealand - so, I ask charity from all parishioners especially towards Fr Chris & myself and the bishops. (I'm happily vaccinated).

Attending masses is one of a variety of events within New Zealand that will affect people over the near future. New Zealanders with a 'Vaccine Pass' will have greater mobility.

This is what we have to do at the moment. Let's see what unfolds in the future.

- ❖ As I'm sure you will guess – Christmas Masses attendance may be a concern for some.