



10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## **ADVENT 2022**

### **REMOVING THE EXEMPTION**

Dear friends in Christ,

You will be aware that during the COVID-19 pandemic period this Archdiocese did not require us to attend Church. This was an extraordinary measure for our health and wellbeing.

Given the facts of the new situation regarding the pandemic, I am lifting the exemption from obligation to worship God at Mass on Sundays from the First Sunday of Advent, 27 November 2022.

Clearly, this obligation does not bind those who have serious health concerns, or who are physically or morally prevented from attending Mass.

Indeed, I ask you to remain at home, if you are feeling unwell, have cold or flu symptoms, or believe you pose a risk to the health of others.

As Catholics we believe that Jesus is present with us in a very special way when we gather as a community in prayer and action, walking together in our faith and celebration. We attend Mass because Jesus feeds us in Word and Sacrament. An obligation to attend Mass is present to support and encourage us all to gather for the Eucharist, "the source and summit" of our entire Christian lives. We need each other's prayers at Mass, especially to support those struggling in life.

We appear to be coming to an end of this long and, for so many, most terrifying time. We reflect on all we have experienced. We pray for each other, especially for those who continue to suffer in any way from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we prepare for the Christmas Season of joy, let us continue our "Walking Together" into this penitential season of ADVENT in repentant and joyful HOPE for the coming of the Saviour at Bethlehem.

**Archbishop Christopher Prowse**  
**Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn**  
**Apostolic Administrator of the Military Ordinariate of Australia**