

CENSUS 'HEAD COUNT' DURING MAY

Over the first four weekends in May, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's National Centre for Pastoral Research (NCPR) will be counting the number of people who attend Mass. The "national count of attendance" is held every five years. This year marks a significant milestone – 25 years of national attendance data, beginning with the first count in 2001.

When the data is analysed, the 2026 results will provide valuable insights into long-term trends in Catholic practice, particularly in understanding the ongoing effects of COVID-19, which influenced attendance patterns in 2021. As in 2021, parishes will be asked to provide estimates of the age and sex of attendees and to report the number of online views for streamed Masses or other assemblies on Sunday.

Church attendance is perhaps the most basic measure of religious practice. Most dioceses conduct counts of attenders, but not every diocese does it with the same frequency, in the same way, or at the same time. According to the most recent national count, conducted in 2021, about 8.2 per cent of Australia's Catholic population, or 417,000 people, went to church on a typical weekend. Most attended Mass in a parish, but the figure also included people in non-parish centres, such as migrant centres, hospitals, jails and boarding schools. People who were attending an assembly in the absence of a priest are also counted.

The national count is conducted in the same year as the Australian census (to be held on 11 August) so that the information collected can most effectively be used in association with results from the other project. Counting over four Sundays ensures that fortnightly and monthly Masses are not overlooked. This is particularly important for many country towns and migrant communities.

The count will be conducted at all Sunday Masses, including Saturday Vigil Masses, but not liturgical services such as prayer group liturgies, funerals, weddings or other Saturday Masses. As this is a visible head count, all children present at the service are included. That includes babes in arms, toddlers, teenagers, adults, celebrants, acolytes, deacons and anyone else present at the service."

The NCPR adds that the count will not disrupt Mass. It can be done, for example, while the collection is being taken up, or as people are arriving or leaving.

PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES

Any parishioners, particularly new parishioners, who wish to participate in the Planned Giving Envelope System for the coming New Financial Year 2026-2027, are asked to contact the Parish Office via email: admin@mmrc.org.au and give us some contact details. **There is a 30% Tax Deduction incentive** available if you are a wage earner and lodge a Tax Return at the end of each financial year. This is a positive way of supporting our parishes. **Please consider our appeal** as it really helps our parish finances if we have a regular weekly income.

If there are any recently retired parishioners who currently donate through the envelopes, but who may want to change to a 'non-tax receipt' category, they are asked to please contact the Parish Office as soon as possible so we can organise the changes before the new financial year commences. **All new enquiries are always welcome.** 😊

EUCCHARIST28 PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the gift of your real presence in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Grant us the grace to receive you reverently, worship you truly and serve you with hearts renewed. By the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen us, so that as you gave yourself to the Father and to us, we too may offer our lives to God and to others. Inspire and help us to serve you in those who are in need, especially the defenceless and homeless, the lonely and lost. Unite us with your sacrifice of the Mass, so that we may truly become what we have received, the Body of Christ, Amen

"HEARTS ON FIRE" PENTECOST CELEBRATION

Jesus Light of the World Community invites you to "Hearts on Fire" Pentecost Celebration on **Saturday, 23rd May** from 1.00 – 5.30pm in St Joseph's Hall. The presenter is Ron Maldigri and the day will include rosary, praise and worship, a talk, a prayer of empowerment, and fellowship. Booking Essential, Afternoon Tea Provided. Enquiries: Helen: 0433 455 114 / Esperance: 0407 749 182 / [Email:jlwcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:jlwcommunity@gmail.com)

CATHOLIC CARE SERVICES / HOME CARE SERVICES

CatholicCare Sydney offers a range of services to help you or a loved one remain happy and safe at home for longer. Our qualified and caring team can help you with:

- Domestic assistance
- Day-to-day tasks like shopping
- Connecting with others
- In-home respite care
- Personal care
- Health and wellness activities
- Allied Health & Clinical Support

To learn more, please call 13 18 19 or visit: catholiccare.org

PARISH SAFEGUARDING

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at 9390 5810 or enquiries@sydneycatholic.org. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK IN OUR PARISHES

We have a number of parishioners who are suffering from cancer and other serious illnesses, and we ask that you please keep them all in your prayers.

RECENTLY DECEASED: Terry Byrnes, Robert O'Dea and Vera Bella.

ANNIVERSARIES: Michael Bresnahan, Jim Alvear, Carmine Ara, Gaetana Vaccaro, Gae Bergin, Maria Nguyen, Pamela Burns,

We especially remember those for whom Masses have been requested, those in our Memorial Books and all our deceased relatives, friends, parishioners and benefactors. May they all rest in peace, Amen.

ST MARY WACKILLOPS QUOTE

"Have we not all taken up the cross and shall we shrink from carrying it?" 11.4.1876

