

**Saint Francis Xavier Church  
Cnr Whitehorse & Dorking Rds  
Box Hill VIC 3128**



**Saint Clare Church  
138 Woodhouse Grove  
Box Hill North VIC 3129**

22 October 2020

Dear Parishioners,

I cannot hide my disappointment with the disregard our state government demonstrates towards people of faith. The blatant discrimination against places of worship compared with hospitality venues are there in black and white in the roadmap changes forecast for announcement on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

The justification offered for this unfairness is nonsense. The Premier has argued that Churches are not regulated like hospitality venues. This is demonstrably not true. Churches are regulated and have been regulated by Federal, State and Local government for a long time. We have to and do comply with the verifiable protocols on food service, hygiene, child safety, fire safety & emergency management.

There is no reason why Churches can't open in a COVID-Safe way just like restaurants and pubs. In fact, indoor church services with COVID-Safe Plans (as we have in our parish) and contact tracing are demonstrably safer than gatherings in public places, let alone pubs and restaurants where masks are removed.

I have been asked to submit our parish CovidSafe plan as an example to the independent medical review being conducted by St Vincent's Health. Hopefully with their endorsement of the effectiveness of the risk management we are undertaking, some pressure might encourage a more rational and favorable consideration by the Government.

I encourage you to exercise your voice as God's people in the public square. As with any such 'raising of the voice', we must do so prudently, never attacking individuals or using language of anger or aggression, but showing boldness and conviction about what is ultimately reasonable and fair.

So please telephone our State Member of Parliament, The Hon. Paul Hamer MP on 9898 6606. And then follow up with an email to him at [Paul.Hamer@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:Paul.Hamer@parliament.vic.gov.au). He is familiar with our parish and attended the 2019 School Graduation Mass at St Francis Xavier's Church.

You might telephone and email our two Government Upper House members;  
Ms Sonja Terpstra MLC on 9803 0592 [sonja.terpstra@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:sonja.terpstra@parliament.vic.gov.au)  
The Hon. Shaun Leane MLC on 9887 0255 [shaun.leane@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:shaun.leane@parliament.vic.gov.au)

The online petition asking the Premier to address the inequality towards places of worship and people of faith in the Victorian government's 'Roadmap for Reopening' has nearly 12,000 signatories. The petition can be found on: <https://www.equalityforfaith.com.au/> . There is still time to sign and distribute the petition to people you know and encourage them to do the same. The petition has received increasingly wider support, most recently from the Victorian Council of Churches, and support from various multi-faith peak bodies through the Faith Communities Council of Victoria. It is endorsed by the Knights of the Southern Cross, The Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy, the Catholic Women's League and the Australian Catholic Medical Association.

The Reconciliation session from 4-5pm on Saturdays, for which St Francis Xavier Church is renowned, is up and running again in a covid safe manner. The outdoor Reconciliation structure on the East Porch of the Church is weather protected and affords anonymity commensurate with the dignity of the sacrament.

Please pray for our civil leaders. They are under incredible pressure and prayers for their good judgement and welfare ultimately benefit everyone in our community.

Yours in Jesus Christ,



Fr Tony Kerin EV PP  
Parish Priest

Important Links and Direct Deposit Account details are:

Church: Name: Parish of Box Hill **Church Account BSB: 083-347 Acct No: 662202656**

Presbytery: Name: Parish of Box Hill **Presbytery Account BSB: 083-347 Acct No: 837114640**

You can also contribute via CDFPay via this link - [CDFpay for Greater Box Hill Parish](#).

Parish *Facebook* page <https://www.facebook.com/GBHparish>.

*YouTube* Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCF7pNUOT1tfuoz6Fu3VwPvg>

Parish **ZoomRoom**: <https://zoom.us/j/2886463871> open Friday 5pm for Friday drinks and Sunday at 11.10am for virtual morning tea.

**Correspondence to Parish Office**

St Francis Xavier & St Clare Parish  
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