

Congregation Stunned as Aussie Police Interrupts Service to Enforce Mask Rule

Worshippers at a church in Perth, Australia, were flabbergasted when police officers interrupted their service to see who was—and wasn't—wearing masks.

One parishioner at St. Bernadette's Catholic Church in Mount Hawthorn named Matthew told local media it was "troubling" to see a police officer interrupt the worship service last Thursday evening, according to The Chronicle. In a separate interview with a radio station, he said everyone in the church was "pretty surprised" by the interruption and found it "pretty confronting."

"Everyone was sort of pretty stunned, I suppose," he said. "Then as soon as it started, it was sort of over as he left. ... It was just pretty confronting seeing police vests and stuff in the church. He didn't remove his hat, which is pretty disrespectful in that environment."

Law enforcement officers reportedly entered the church after receiving a tip that some of the congregants were not following local mandates requiring masks to be worn indoors.

In a brief statement, the police confirmed they interrupted the worship service.

"Police responded to a report from a member of the public of people not wearing masks inside a church in Mount Hawthorn," read the statement. "Upon attendance, five people were spoken to by police and complied in wearing a mask. One person provided proof of an exemption."

How Did the Church Respond?

The church released its own statement last Friday, telling parishioners they have to wear masks.

“Please ensure that you are wearing a mask when you are attending mass/adoration,” the church stated. “You are not permitted to enter the church unless you are wearing a mask. If you have an exemption letter from your doctor, then please make certain that you carry this on you at all time.

“Heavy fines on the parish priest, our parish, and individuals will be incurred if you are caught without wearing your mask,” it continued. “Please cooperate with this request so as to avoid any complications.” {eo}

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