

Dear community of St. Gregory:

For us as men and women of faith in our St. Gregory parish, restrictions imposed these days of coronavirus have been very challenging and even painful regarding our inability to have public access to our Church. As we move slowly and cautiously towards a position of "reopening", I believe that the words of Pope Francis are paramount: "At this moment, when we begin to have provisions to leave the house, let us pray to the Lord to give to his people, to all of us, the grace of prudence and obedience to the provisions, so that the pandemic does not return".

We need to realize that while progress has been made, the pandemic is not over and we are obligated to continue to cooperate with each other to do what we can to ensure the safety of ourselves and others and prevent it's return.

In this context, I emphasize that all Catholics in the Diocese of Phoenix are exempt from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and that this dispensation remains in effect until further notice. The goal of this is to ensure the well-being and safety of everyone, not just older people and those at risk of getting sick, but anyone of any age to make a prudent decision about their own well-being and that of the rest. Basically, as we begin and continue the "reopening" process, no one is obligated or should feel compelled to come to church. This is a free individual decision and someone could have a serious reason not to attend.

My intention is not to repeat what we hear daily in the news or tire you with general recommendations, however, everything that helps us to be in communion of faith and good functioning is never too much. The following list is a summary of the frequently asked questions I have received and which I simply and directly attempt to answer.

- The Church office continues to serve you. Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- We suggest the use of a face mask to protect your entrance.
- The protocols that will be used for Sunday Masses will also be taken into account for the celebration of daily Masses. All the usual Mass times have been restored.
- There must be the appropriate social distancing both inside and outside the Church.
- It is recommended that face masks be used in the church, except for the reception of Holy Communion.
- Hand sanitizers and wipes should be used. Be sure to disinfect your hands after arriving at the church, before receiving Holy Communion and after leaving the church. Care should also be taken not to touch your face during mass.
- The holy water fountain will remain empty.
- Only a singer and instrumentalist will be used for liturgical choir, this is currently limited.
- Only one Lector is necessary, avoiding many movements in various areas.
- There will be no altar servers at the time.
- The priest or deacon will give a short homily facilitating services lasting approximately 30 min. Only masses transmitted over the internet will have a normal duration.

- There will be no offering procession or collection through pews. There will be baskets near the Altar to deposit your offering. It is also suggested to do it online. Your support is greatly appreciated and valuable.
- We will avoid handshakes before mass or holding hands during the Our Father.
- In the line for the reception of Holy Communion the appropriate distance must be taken into account. It is recommended, for the safety of others and the recipient, that the Eucharist is received only in hand at this time. At St. Gregory, the distribution of the Holy Eucharist will be at the end of the celebration and distributed out by sections (A, B, C).
- The priest and extraordinary communion ministers will wear a face mask for the distribution of Holy Communion.
- The Church will be properly disinfected after each service.
- We will try to have ushers or volunteers available in the church to help accommodate the parishioners. We have capacity for 140 people in the Church, and 65 in Gordon Hall if it is your preference.
- There will be as few people as possible in the sacristy before and after Mass. There can be no public meetings before or after Mass.
- In case of doubt, mistakes, or lack of common sense of some people, please do not lose your patience or offend anyone. Let us try to educate and correct with charity.
- The live broadcast of Masses in our parish will continue.

It is very encouraging to experience your desire to return to church and I thank you for this living sign of faith. I also appreciate your contributions that allow us to operate soberly and responsibly. No matter how limited we may be at this time, we are united as the Body of Christ and, as that Body, our respect and mutual love is what marks us as his followers.

God bless you

Fr. Andrés Arango

Pastor