



Most Holy Trinity Parish

An Arizona Non-profit Corporation

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Most Holy Trinity – Procedures for Restarting Masses, Phase 1

Dear Friends,

We have been through a lot during these past few months. We have struggled to make sense of this pandemic while trying to protect each other and our families. This week we begin moving forward on implementing **Phase 1**, part of a three-phase process of reopening for Sunday masses at Most Holy Trinity. The decision on starting **Phase 1** was made in close coordination with Bishop Weisenburger and in compliance with the Center of Disease Control (CDC) standards. The protocols that I am outlining to you for our parish is a result of this coordination and consultation. **Based on what we know, we plan to restart public mass on Pentecost weekend on a reservation basis only.**

For the last month we at Most Holy Trinity have been working out every detail of reopening the parish. We have studied other parishes, worked closely with the diocese while testing out a series of options that demonstrates the safest options for your return to mass. I can say that we now meet the necessary requirements for opening based on diocesan policy as outlined in the “**General Instructions for Pastors**” and the recommendations of the CDC.

Important Considerations for you to Make

While we are doing everything that is reasonable to provide a safe environment, there is an inherent risk, regardless of age or health, in attending any public event. This includes religious services. While we are working to reduce the risk, there are no risk-free situations. Your attendance at any public event constitutes his or her understanding and acceptance of the essential level of risk. Therefore, because the risks involved, if you are 65 or older and dealing with any threatening health condition, **we encourage you to stay home** and continue celebrating the mass at home via our online mass.

If you are living with an at-risk person in your home, we encourage to you stay home. If you feel uncomfortable and fearful of attending mass, **rest assured that Bishop Weisenburger has dispensed Sunday obligation for everyone until further notice.** Therefore, do not feel guilty for not attending mass during these early phases.

For those of you who will not attend mass and desire to receive the Eucharist, we request that watch our mass at home and afterward come to the church where we will offer you the opportunity to receive communion. Communion will be offered on Sundays from 9 am until 10 am under the front door arch. *(Please maintain social distances when approaching the Eucharist and wear a mask.)*

Phase 1 Reopening

Phase 1 will be the strictest of the procedures for restarting church celebrations and we all need to adhere to the procedures to protect our families and friends.

Under **Phase 1** we will be limiting the number of parishioners to make sure that safe social distancing will be followed at all times. Because of this you will see a fundamental difference in how you will experience liturgy. The biggest difference you will see is all masses will be celebrated outside of the building in the parking area behind the church.

After careful study we learned that the safest place for a group of people to congregate is outside of an enclosed space where air can flow freely. However, celebrating mass outside will dramatically alter our schedule. Listed below will be the new **Phase 1** mass schedule. *(Times may be slightly altered to take in account lengthening days.)*

Saturday

7:30 am - 45 placements only

6:30pm Sunset mass - 50 placements only

Sunday

7:30 am - 45 placements only

6 :30 pm - Sunset 45 placements only

Monday

7 30 am - 45 placements only

As we watch the attendance we will learn if we need to add or subtract a mass.

Procedures at Mass under Phase 1

1. At this time, we can only allow 45 placements. A placement equals a single person, a couple or a family of no more than 4 persons including the driver. This is required to maintain social distancing.
2. **All attendance will be based on an online reservation system.** The reservation system will be in operation starting next Monday and can be reached through our website. You can also call Mr. Steve McManus, our reservation coordinator, at 520-427-4488 and he will be happy to assist you.

- a. Once you receive your reservation you will receive a confirmation via email
 - b. Again, a reservation can represent one individual, a couple or small family.
 - c. *(Small family = no more than 4 people at a time including driver)*
 - d. Please make sure you attend the mass specified for your reservation.
 - e. When you arrive at the parking lot entrance, an usher will check for your reservation.
3. If you are feeling ill do not attend mass. I.E., No temperatures, or other signs of illness.
 4. Participants and families will be spaced 9 to 15ft from other families or individuals. A chair will be placed on each assigned location.
 5. All participants **MUST** wear a mask while on the property until you return to your vehicle. ***This requirement is designed, not to protect you but to protect your fellow parishioners.***
 6. After your car is parked, proceed under the front door arch, sanitize your hands and walk down the sidewalk past the gospel rooms to the back-parking lot.
 7. Ushers will assign seats during **Phase 1** to ensure proper social distancing. If you are a couple or a small family, you may bring your own lawn or camping chair and place it directly next to your assigned chair if that makes you comfortable. We will have extra chairs available. However, if you bring your own camping or lawn chair, you must take it home with you.
 8. You will remain in your seats throughout the liturgy.
 9. There will be no hymnals or missalettes until further notice.
 10. There will be no Holy Water available until further notice.
 11. Due to possible heat bring water for hydration. Make sure to take that bottle of water home and do not share it with anyone.
 12. Music will be meditative only. We have learned that singing can increase the risk of spreading the virus.
 13. During the liturgy there will be no sign of peace. You can acknowledge each other with a simple bow.
 14. In a change of order, the Holy Eucharist will be offered to you as you leave the worship space, not during the mass.
 15. We will direct you, as to how to leave and receive Eucharist in order to keep social distancing.
 16. Procedure for reception of Eucharist:

- a. As you leave you will see the communion distribution area. It will have a table with a donation basket to support the parish and a hand sanitizing bottle. This will be approximately 20 feet from the Eucharistic Ministers.
 - b. While in line, follow the line markings and maintain a safe distance. Distance = 10ft.
 - c. Before approaching the Eucharistic Minister, please use the hand sanitizer to wash hands.
 - d. Eucharist Ministers will serve the Eucharist in the hands only. **No serving on the tongue under any circumstances.** The precious blood will not be served until further notice.
 - e. Keep Mask on when receiving Eucharist and do not consume the eucharist in front of the Eucharistic Minister's face.
17. Upon reception of the Eucharist, we ask you to return to your vehicle and leave the parish parking lot immediately. Do not linger in the parking lot.
18. Finally, because of restrictions and age, I and Fr. Paul will not be able serve you Eucharist or greet you in the usually MHT way. This pains us greatly. However, please understand that this is temporary and that you are constantly in our thoughts and prayers.

A Special note About Children

Because of the newly discovered threat to young children, we are asking you as parents to keep your children at home. I know this is a burden and painful, but keeping children safe and secure is of paramount concern during these times. **Therefore, no children under the age of 7.** If you wish to attend mass then I encourage each parent to attend a different mass. When I was a small child, I had a hard time at mass so the local pastor made the same recommendation to my parents. It seemed to work out. After all I am a priest.

We are in this Together

I know this is a lot to ask during this opening phase and it may seem frightening. However, I think we can all agree that we must be extremely cautious at this time to protect each other and our loved ones. We will do our best to make sure you feel as welcomed and as comfortable as is reasonable.

Please remember, that by caring for each other we are living our faith of compassion and honoring each other in a very special way. I firmly believe that God will reward us for our care and patience. As always, we will keep you informed as we move forward.

May God bless you and your family abundantly as we take our first baby steps toward a new life with each other.

Yours in the Savior, Fr. Tom