



Our Lady of the Valley

3220 W. Greenway Rd
Phoenix AZ 85053

www.olvstr.net

Saint Raphael

5525 W. Acoma Rd.
Glendale AZ 85306

Time to come home to Mass

While we remain very much in the throes of the coronavirus, many of us have expanded our interaction beyond the strict stay-at-home order at the outset of this pandemic. The dispensation from Sunday and holy day Masses remains in force for those whose health is seriously compromised. Those of us who, gratefully, remain in good health and follow the guidance of health authorities should return to regular in-person participation at Sunday Mass.

If you can answer YES to any of the statement listed below, you should be going to Mass again.

- You are no longer working from home and are back to working on site.
- You are attending class in person (even occasionally) or desire to do so.
- You freely engage in shopping at the supermarkets and retail stores.
- You are back at the gym.
- You dine out, either indoors or outdoors.
- You have broadened your circle of contact in social interaction.
- You are in good health, with no chronic health issues, and observe the proper protocols for safeguarding your health and that of others (face covering, physically distancing and hygiene).

During the time of Covid-19 restrictions everything we do as a parish family is done collaboratively, no matter which physical site hosts the event.

Currently our combined parish community offers two Sunday Mass; one at each parish site:

**4:00 pm, Saturday at Our Lady of the Valley,
and 9:00 am, Sunday at St. Raphael.**

Public Masses celebrated on weekdays:

- **Tuesday, 9:00 am, St. Raphael Church;**
- **Wednesday, 9:00 am, Our Lady of the Valley Church.**

We remain limited to 25% of each church's occupancy. Attendees agree to wear face covering that covers the nose and mouth, observe six feet of distance in seating and during any movement within the community and follow the direction of hospitality ministers in seating, the Communion procession and in exiting the church after Mass. These practices remain in force until such a time when the guidance is altered by health authorities and the Diocese of Phoenix.

We want to offer our parishioners an additional Sunday Mass option.

**Beginning Sunday, November 1, The Solemnity of All Saints,
the 10:30 am Mass on Sunday at Our Lady of the Valley will be restored.**

The addition of this extra Mass is dependent on two needs:

- One, that we have sufficient personnel to assist with maintaining the protocols in seating and in movement during the liturgy; and
- Two, that we have a priest available.

As with our existing Masses,

- Your attendance is consent to wear a face covering, maintain the appropriate physical distance and follow the direction of hospitality personnel.
- Entrance to the church is only through the main entrance.
- The doors of the church will close when Mass begins, and latecomers will not be admitted. To maintain proper physical distancing once Mass had begun is disruptive.
- If we have reached our seating capacity prior to the beginning of Mass, the doors will be closed.
- Drinking faucets are not available.

- We urge attendees to take care of their bathroom needs before they leave home. While the restrooms will be accessible, they remain one of the highest forms of spreading germs.
- An attended basket is available in the vestibule for your offering when you enter the church. While we cannot pass the basket, we desperately need your financial support.

Those willing to commit to assist with the hospitality ministry on an ongoing basis should contact music and liturgy director, Frank Dominguez, at liturgy@olvstr.net. He can also be reached through the St. Raphael Parish office number: 602-938-4227. There will be some training and guidance. **Without additional personnel we cannot restore the 10:30 am Mass.**

Currently, we do not have the availability of the customary weekend assistance from area retired priests because of Covid limitations for those of vulnerable age and health. Canon Law limits the number of Masses a priest can celebrate on a given day without the permission of the bishop. As has been the case since mid-March, I remain the only priest available for ministry to St. Raphael and Our Lady of the Valley parishes. As long as I stay healthy, we will provide Mass and Sacraments. My health is not just a matter of the coronavirus; **if I have any symptoms of cold, flu, persistent cough, sneezing or runny nose, I cannot preside at the altar. If you experience any of these same symptoms, you should stay away from Mass and other large gatherings too.** We will reach out to the diocese and see if a priest can be found, should there be ample time. Virtually all parishes have lost their access to retired priests in the area to help with sacramental ministry. Covid-19 has highlighted the limited number of able-bodied priests available for ministry. We priests are not enough to go around.

For more than 15 years I have been covering two parishes. It helps that they are the best parishes!

We will continue to follow the guidance of the CDC, state health authorities and the Diocese of Phoenix to safeguard the health and wellbeing of us all.

- Those who have chronic health issues that your doctors say can be exacerbated by Covid-19 exposure should continue to stay at home.
- Those who are primary caregivers to these individuals should also stay at home.

If you answered affirmatively to any of the bullet points listed at the beginning of this letter, it is time to get back to Mass and Holy Communion in person.

Covid-19 is like the relative who overstays their welcome; but just like family, we cannot easily throw it out. We will continue to do our part to provide the safest environment in our churches for Sunday Mass and everyone who comes to in-person Mass must do their part too.

Sincerely,



Rev. Edward J. Kaminski, CSC
Pastor