



Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

8131 North 16th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85020

Tel.: 602-861-9778
Fax: 602-861-9796

POLICY STATEMENT / 18 MARCH 2020 of Holy Protection of Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

Re: Parish Liturgical and Other Events and Practices Relevant to Corona Virus Pandemic

In recognition of guidelines established this date by the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh regarding the current Corona Virus situation in the United States, and mindful of the current civil recognition and assessment of the Corona Virus infection situation in the United States, and of subsequent civil directives recently initiated to counteract further spread of this virus, it shall be the policy of Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix, until further notice, to:

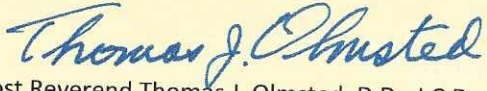
1. Grant a dispensation to the Faithful from the obligation to attend the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Holy Days;
2. Suspend all other parish activities, including, but not limited to: The public celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the assembling and conducting of Religious Education classes and/or adult education offerings, social gatherings, such as those held after the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sundays, and dinner events, such as Fish Fries, although parishes may make such dinners available on a 'take-out' basis only. However, any event, gathering, or meeting which requires or which may involve ten (10) or more people is prohibited by this policy;
3. Allow Wedding, Funeral, and Baptismal Liturgy celebrations, but only with immediate family members in attendance, and limiting the number of such attendees to no more than ten (10). Those in higher risk groups for contracting the virus are encouraged not to attend;
4. Allow priests to celebrate the Divine Liturgy privately, even if no one else is in attendance, and thereby either satisfy already accepted Divine Liturgy intentions or reschedule such liturgical intentions to a future date;
5. Allow celebration of the Sacrament of Penance by appointment only, provided adequate ventilation is available and a minimum distance of six (6) feet is maintained between the priest and penitent;
6. Encourage the Faithful to listen to and/or observe celebrations of the Divine Liturgy via live streaming services which some of our parishes offer, including St. Stephen Cathedral in Phoenix;
7. Allow churches and chapels to remain open for private prayer with protocol for proper social distancing to be observed;
8. Place a sign of adequate size on the front door of the parish church and/or chapel notifying the Faithful of the following:
 - a. Bishop Olmsted has dispensed all of the Faithful from attending Divine Liturgy until further notice;
 - b. Catholics are encouraged to make a Spiritual Communion and offer devotional prayers during this time;
 - c. The parish may also wish to list streaming services available, and/or other media outlets offering liturgical and/or prayer programming.

(continued on other side)

This policy also currently affects Holy Week celebrations, including Easter Sunday, but will be reviewed and either affirmed or amended, closer to the scheduled dates of these celebrations, and not later than Friday 3 April 2020. For updates and current information on this situation as it affects the Church, you may visit dphx.org/StayHealthy.

Asking for God's blessing, guidance, and healing in these extraordinary circumstances, I thank you for your cooperation with, and adherence to this policy.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted, D.D., J.C.D.

Apostolic Administrator, Sede Plena, of Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

