



## **San Felipe de Jesus Roman Catholic Church – Nogales**

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Pastor: Rev. Father Jose Manuel Padilla

### Reopening of San Felipe de Jesus Church for Public Worship

We are living our faith in new ways, imperfect as it may be, but because of this we are fulfilling one of our strongest commandments *to love thy neighbor*. The last few weeks have been extremely difficult for our community. Not being able to attend Holy Mass or receive the Holy Eucharist in person hurts every faithful's heart directly. We are sacrificing the core of our faith in order to keep our community and loved ones healthy. It is for this reason that our sacrifice is and will continue to be extremely important. In thanks to your prayers and commitment, the time has come to begin the move toward public worship once again. It is with great joy that we announce Phase 1 of the reopening of our church.

A Reopening Committee created a plan guided by the regulations and recommendations of the Diocese of Tucson and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Naturally, temporary restrictions will be present, along with protocols to follow, in order to continue our commitment to take care of our *neighbor*. Based on the community's response as responsible Catholics, restrictions may eventually decrease, but the possibility exists that we may have to revert to reclosure if this committee or the Diocese of Tucson deems it necessary.

Furthermore, while the Reopening Committee and Father Manolo Padilla are working to reduce the risk, there are no risk-free situations. A parishioner's presence at a public event constitutes his or her understanding and acceptance that there is an inherent risk, regardless of age or health, in attending any public event. This includes religious services.

Because of this we encourage the continued practice of our faith by participating in virtual masses. Especially for the "vulnerable persons" of our community. This includes adults of 65 years and older and those with a chronic health condition, as identified by the CDC and the Diocese of Tucson. In addition, we ask that families with small children 5 years and younger consider staying home as well. Be aware that the Sunday Mass Obligation is suspended within the Diocese of Tucson until further notice.

As a committee we feel that the best time to initiate the gradual reopening of our parish will be on the weekend of June 5<sup>th</sup> to June 8<sup>th</sup>. Because of the limitations created by social distancing, the occupancy of our church will be reduced by 75%. Only a total number of 175 parishioners will be allowed to attend Mass at one time.

To help with this situation, Bishop Edward Weisenburger will allow for the celebration of the Sunday Mass Liturgy to start Friday evening through to the end of Monday evening. This will also stretch out our Mass schedules which will allow for the sanitation of the church between Masses.

The Mass Schedule for San Felipe de Jesus Church will be as follows:

- Friday 5: 6PM
- Saturday 6: 3PM and 6PM
- Sunday 7: \*9AM and 1PM
- Monday 8: 6PM

\*The 9AM Mass on Sunday will also be broadcasted live on our parish's Facebook page.

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All Masses will be celebrated in Spanish by Father Manolo Padilla. Mass servers will be limited to only a few key positions. All servers will be persons of low health risk and will be screened for symptoms before every Mass. We will have six ushers, two attending the parking lot, two welcoming and giving instruction at the doors and two assisting with seating. We will also have a commentator and 4 to 6 Extraordinary Ministers who will assist the priest with the distribution of the Holy Communion.

To further protect certain members of our community and keep a better control of social distancing, we have prioritized different Masses for certain parishioners. As good Catholics we should respect these recommended attendance priorities as much as possible.

- Friday 5, 6PM – Prioritized for servers who will be volunteering during opening weekend and their families. This Mass will serve as training for these servers.
- Saturday 6, 3PM – Prioritized for healthy persons of 65 years and older.
- Saturday 6, 6PM – Prioritized for teenagers and young adults, singles or married couples.
- Sunday 7, 9AM – Prioritized for families with children under 13 years old.
- Sunday 7, 1PM – Prioritized for households of 3 or more.
- Monday 8, 6PM – General community

**1. General attendance information:** We ask that you please follow these general recommendations and indications:

- a. Stay home if there is any suspicion that you may have come in contact with the COVID-19 virus or someone carrying the virus.
- b. Stay home if you are feeling ill in any way or are showing symptoms.
- c. Vulnerable parishioners of 65 years or older and those with a chronic disease are urged to stay home.
- d. Arrive early, waiting in a socially distanced line to enter the church should be expected. We recommend arrival 15 minutes before the start of Mass.
- e. A sign advising that the "CHURCH IS NOW FULL" will be posted at the entrance gate. Please respect this notice and do not enter the parking lot.
- f. No one will be denied entry to the church under normal and safe circumstances, but if at any point Fr. Manolo Padilla and/or the committee in charge feel that the church is becoming too full to be reasonably considered healthy or safe, the entrance gate will be closed.

**2. What to expect once you arrive to church:** We require that all parishioners attending mass follow and obey the following requirements:

- a. Social distancing will be expected on church grounds at all times, at exterior and interior spaces.
  - i. Keep a healthy 6-foot distance between you and other individuals OR your household and other persons not living in the same household.
  - ii. Markers and guides will be placed to assist with distancing.
  - iii. Every other pew will be marked as “closed” to assist with distancing.
  - iv. Restroom use will be limited to one person at a time.
- b. Entrance protocol and process:
  - i. There will only be one entrance point. All other doors are to remain open for ventilation purposes but will be clearly blocked from entry.
  - ii. All who enter the church property will be required to use a mask as recommended by the CDC. Masks are also to be worn during Mass.
  - iii. Ushers will invite you to deposit your offering at collection boxes at the entrance.
  - iv. Everyone's temperature will be checked on the forehead with a no-touch thermometer. No one with a surface temperature of 34 degrees Celsius (93.2 Fahrenheit) will be allowed to enter.
  - v. Everyone will be required to sanitize their hands before entering. Hand sanitizer gel will be provided but we recommend that you also bring your own to be used during Mass.
  - vi. You will be guided by the usher to available seating.
  - vii. The seating will be filled from the front towards the back.
- c. Inside the Church:
  - i. All Holy Water fonts, Missalettes and prayer cards will be removed.
  - ii. No chorus will be present, and all congregational singing is suspended.
  - iii. Please be attentive at all times to the instructions and indications provided by the commentator and/or the priest.
  - iv. The Sign of Peace will continue to be done without physical contact, as well as reframing from holding hands during The Lord's Prayer.
- d. The reception of communion will be done in this manner:
  - i. All Ministers are required to sanitize their hands before, after and if necessary, during distribution.
  - ii. All Ministers are required to wear masks.
  - iii. Everyone must remain seated.
  - iv. Please sanitize your hands in preparation for receiving the Host.
  - v. The Minister will come to you and will distribute Communion by moving through the empty pews that have been closed for distancing reasons.
  - vi. The Host will be placed on your hands, no mouth communion will be allowed.
  - vii. The Minister will wait until you have consumed the Host before moving on.
- e. Exiting the Church:
  - i. There will be no personal greeting done by the priest at any time.
  - ii. Please remain in your seat until an usher points you toward an exit.
  - iii. Exiting will take place through different doors and one pew at a time.
  - iv. No paper church bulletin will be distributed.

**3. Sanitizing of the Church:**

- a. All surfaces will be sanitized as recommended by CDC guidelines before, during and after each Mass by church volunteers. Every surface that may have been touched will be sanitized as reasonably possible, these areas may include the entrance area, pews and doors.

**4. Other services and Sacraments:**

- a. The church will be closed to the public from Tuesday through Thursday.
- b. Daily Mass will continue to be broadcasted live on Facebook from Tuesday to Thursday.
- c. Please check the parish website and Facebook for Reconciliation and other schedules.

**It is extremely important to understand that the committee may decide to cancel the reopening if at any point we consider that it is not safe to open the church as planned. The committee may also decide to reclose the church if circumstances change after reopening.**

**Please keep attentive to any changes and/or new information. The parish Facebook and website page will be the main source for official notices.**

Thank you for your attention to these guidelines. Our response as parishioners will show our continued commitment to protect our community and our loved ones, who include our priests and ministers. As we continue to work toward the gradual reopening of our church, we ask for your continued prayers for the end of the pandemic, for our priests, and for all the people affected by the virus.

The Committee for the Reopening of San Felipe de Jesus Church

Rev. Father Manolo Padilla, Pastor

Dr. Carlos Encinas, Neurosurgeon

Eloy Cortez, Retired CBP Director of Policy and Planning

Luis L. Leyva, Arizona Knights of Columbus State Hispanic Membership Coordinator

Gaston S. Alejos, Arizona Knights of Columbus District Deputy #2