



A Message from the Director of Marriage and Family

Dear Saint Bernard Families,

My name is Mr. Ryan Ayala and I am the new Director of Marriage and Family. I have been married for six years, and I am blessed with a rambunctious four year old son and a very sweet year-and-half old daughter...we are also expecting baby number three in February! Previously, I served as Director of Campus Evangelization and Theology Teacher at Saint Mary's Catholic High School and Youth Minister at Saint Thomas the Apostle in Phoenix. I also teach the Youth Specialization course for the Kino Institute at the Diocesan Pastoral Center. Prior to my arrival to Phoenix, I served as Campus Minister at the University of Notre Dame. I have Bachelor of Arts in Theology and a Master of Education from the University of Mary. I look forward to getting to know you and serving the community of St. Bernard's!

Thank you for your patience! The summer continues to be a roller coaster ride for all of us as we plan for the future only to have circumstances change. Fortunately, we are protected and supported by our Lord, and patron saint, Bernard of Clairvaux. In 1113 AD, St. Bernard was asked to establish a new monastery in a remote and forbidden city called *Valle d'Absinthe* ("Valley of Bitterness") – however, St. Bernard, filled with the Holy Spirit, trust, and hope in the Lord changed the name of the city to *Clairvaux* ("Valley of Light"). As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, it is my hope that we will continue to follow in his footsteps and be a "Valley of Light" for our community, Church and world.

I would also like to announce our new Youth Minister, Maria Stoej, to the community! Maria is bringing a wealth of experience and energy into the youth ministry program. She is excited to continue to build upon the great work of her predecessor Mr. Shannon Hards.

As we await guidance from the Diocese of Phoenix and Governor Ducey, please know that we are doing everything in our power to return to safe in-person classes and ministries at St. Bernard's. Of course, we must be humbly obedient to our state and diocesan leaders as we attend to the health and safety of our parishioners and children, but we remain firmly committed to fostering a community centered in Jesus Christ, love and compassion.

Here are some of the plans that we are making, and continue to make, as we respond to these dynamic circumstances. Please know that this is a constantly changing situation, and plans can (and probably will) change.

Spiritual Opportunities

Mass and Reconciliation is our highest priority.

- St. Bernard Parishioners & Visitors are welcome to attend one of our Weekend Masses (5pm Sat & 7:30am, 9am and 11am Sun) as well as Daily Mass at 9am with the understanding that we can only seat up to 25% of our capacity for each Mass.

- You can also watch our live-streamed Mass at 9am Weekdays and 11am on Sunday (Please check out our website). You may also receive Holy Communion after the attendees have left the Church.
- Confessions are available in the Parish Hall every Saturday from 4pm-4:30pm.
- The Church will be open for private prayer during these hours while we prepare to fully open all public Masses at St. Bernard's:
 - After the 9am Mass - 4pm Monday – Thursday
 - After the 9am Mass - 2pm Friday
 - After the 9am Mass - 5pm Saturday
 - After the 11am Mass - 1pm Sunday
 - 4pm to 4:30pm every Saturday

Faith Formation – Reopening Plans

- For families wanting to enroll their children into our Children’s Catechesis Program (Kindergarten-5th grade), Edge Program (6th-8th grade) and / or LifeTeen Program (9th-12th), you will now have two options to select from to best serve your specific needs.
 1. Return to in-person learning. Classes will start on the week of September 14th.
 2. Provide catechesis at home by using the Faith First at Home Family Program provided by Miss Kathleen Stine. For our Edge or LifeTeen program, please contact Maria Stoej at youth@stboc.org
- Registrations will be available on **Saturday, August 22 and Saturday August 29 from 1-3pm in the Parish Hall.**

Please note as a parish we are committed to in-person learning and formation, we will:

- Take the necessary precautions to allow in-person learning to continue to take place in our classrooms.
- Allow high risk individuals or individuals who live with high risk individuals to participate using our Faith First at Home Family Guide.
- Maintain our normally small class sizes.
- Position students in classrooms to maintain the required maximum distance between individuals.
- Require students to use their own materials and supplies rather than shared supplies.

Physical Safety and Health

Recommendations from the CDC and government officials continue to be that practicing physical distancing, wearing a face mask, and practicing good hygiene are the best ways to prevent spread. The definition of a person who is exposed to someone with Covid-19 is a person that has had close contact (less than 6 ft) with a person with Covid-19 for greater than 10 minutes without a mask. Therefore, we will operate as follows:

- Conduct health screenings at the beginning of each ministry session, which will include checking temperature and possible symptoms.
- Any parishioner or student with a fever needs to stay home according to CDC guidance.
- As long as the order from the City of Scottsdale remains, all parishioners, staff, and students will be required to wear masks while they are on the property of St. Bernard's.
- Numerous hand sanitizer stations are being installed in the Parish Hall and church so that parishioners can regularly practice good hygiene.
- All ministries are asked to avoid providing meals until January 2021.
- Install hospital grade air filters in all classrooms.
- The parish hall, classrooms, church, and parish office will all be cleaned and sanitized daily by, Office Keepers, a cleaning company based out of Mesa.

Contingency Plans for Ministries

If we are not able to have full in-person ministries due to state and diocesan restrictions, we have the following contingency plans in place:

- Option 1 (Faith First at Home Family Program): This option is available to children wanting to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and / or First Holy Communion. Please contact Miss Kathleen Stine.
- Option 2 (FORMED): If parents would like to continue providing formation for their children, we would like to encourage you to sign up for FORMED. FORMED is a technology platform for the delivery of award-winning Catholic content, children's programming, audio talks, e-books and more!

If you would like to sign up, please follow the instructions below:

1. Got to <https://formed.org/signup>
2. Enter the parish zip code, choose your parish, and click next
3. Type in your name and email address, click next.
4. Go to your email and click the link to watch. You will get into FORMED to begin browsing.

I am confident that under the guidance and intercession of St. Bernard, we will continued to be filled with all the necessary blessings and gifts that we need.

In Christ,

Mr. Ryan Ayala (Director of Family and Marriage)
 Miss Kathleen Stine (Coordinator of Children's Catechesis)
 Mrs. Maria Stoey (Youth Minister)