



Holy Spirit Catholic Community

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Dear Friends,

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” These words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:39 are the second part of the Great Commandment, prominently inscribed on Mount Sinai granite outside both of our church buildings here in Rock Springs.

I am writing this note with one hope: That we would commit to love our most vulnerable neighbors by protecting them from this Covid-19 pandemic.

Will you join with me in wearing a face covering when you come to Mass throughout the next few months? Bishop Steven is strongly encouraging parishes to use face coverings at this time. Please notice, he is not requiring masks at Mass, yet. Recognizing that we as independent Wyoming people do not enjoy being told what to do, we are encouraging, recommending, and requesting. My overarching goal is to provide as much access to the sacraments and to communal worship as I responsibly can. I write this letter in prayerful reflection and having received additional prayerful guidance from our leadership bodies: Latino, Finance and Pastoral Councils

We had roughly 20 members of our parish die from covid in about three and a half months last winter; exact numbers are difficult to know because some families did not want to share that their loved one died of covid. Locally, several faith-filled Christian congregations passed the virus among their members because they did not take precautions. To my knowledge, especially because face coverings were required by our bishop, no one contracted covid from joining at Mass at Holy Spirit. I pray that we would love our neighbors that come to celebrate Eucharist by wearing a simple face covering, maintaining distance as much as possible, staying home when unwell, and cultivating hand hygiene. It is an act of Christian devotion to steward the gift of life.

Like many, I initially thought covid was a city problem and wouldn't hit us here. I wondered if it was a media-driven over-reaction. As I have walked with overwhelmed members of our medical community and comforted grieving families, my view has changed. My heart is heavy at the prospect of any more funerals for preventable reasons.

I encouraged us a few months ago to “trust God, but tie up your horse.” The most powerful method to move on from this pandemic appears to be vaccination. The Vatican, Bishop Steven, and I as your pastor encourage you to get vaccinated with one of the approved vaccines. Vaccination is an action of love for neighbor.

For months I have attempted to gently encourage vaccination, and I am again repeating that encouragement more directly. Please speak with your medical provider, call Sweetwater County Public Health for more information at 922-5390, or go to www.vaccines.gov to find locations. If you seek vaccination now, you can be fully vaccinated and most able to care for your neighbor at around the time this virus will likely peak transmission in October.

I hope you saw over the course of the summer that I deeply desire us to move into our regular practices of the faith as quickly as we responsibly can. Please know that I make these requests only for now, they will not be forever. I trust you know that I am doing my best to shepherd our community with responsibility and holiness in this challenging time—please pray for me! And let us continue to pray to love our neighbor as ourselves.

In Christian love,

Saturday Mass 4pm, Sunday 11:30 (Spanish): face coverings required
All other Masses and gatherings: face coverings strongly encouraged

Fr Bill Hill
Pastor