



DIOCESE OF PUEBLO
C O L O R A D O

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 13, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I wish to give thanks to you for your continued faith and commitment to the spread of the Gospel in Westcliffe. As we begin this new year, it is my hope that we may move forward in the mission of Jesus Christ with new vigor and renewed dedication.

This past year has most definitely been a time of transition and struggle as we face the continued effects of the Covid19 pandemic. It is my hope that you are all healthy and free from the virus. We pray for a speedy end to the troubling times that have kept us away from friends and family. It sounds like we are slowly making progress against the spread of this virus by holding to the precautions set before us by health departments and health workers.

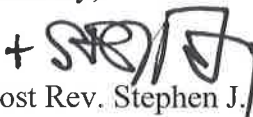
It has been brought to my attention, however, that some of you have decided against wearing a mask during Mass and have caused some problems with fellowship after Mass by rearranging chairs and tables set up with social distancing precautions. I have given much discernment and prayer to these mandates and I feel that the safety of all the faithful is of great concern during this Covid19 pandemic. Although the use of masks has been debated by many in the political circles of government, the majority believe that wearing a mask has helped to lessen the spread of the virus. I agree with that majority and have asked that all parishioners who wish to attend Mass must wear a mask and keep the six-foot social distance in public spaces. Those who live in the same household may sit together at Mass, but each person should always wear a mask, except for receiving Holy Communion. This is not negotiable.

Because this has been an ongoing problem, I ask that you please refrain from removing your mask at Mass and respect the social distancing precautions. I have given Fr. Tony permission to discontinue the Mass if these requests are being ignored, and I have asked for the assistance of Mr. Dan Corsentino to provide for security personnel for the next two Sundays.

Please note that these precautions are placed before us for the protection of all the faithful, including our priests who are working hard to administer the sacraments to all in need, especially the sick and the dying.

May God Bless you all and bring an end to this pandemic.

Sincerely,



Most Rev. Stephen J. Berg, D.D.
Bishop of the Diocese of Pueblo