

Robert Dreher & Carol Kennedy
Members of Our Lady of the Assumption
1011 Sangre Drive
Westcliffe, Colorado 81252

Monday, 18 January 2021

Bishop Stephen Berg
Diocese of Pueblo, Colorado

Bishop Berg,

We were in attendance at mass yesterday and experienced your exercise of power against our parishioners. You have succeeded in greatly damaging our parish.

Having read your letter several times we have some comments from our own personal experience:

- Regarding Covid restrictions in this county: All restaurants are open for inside dining with no masks once seated following social distancing. If restaurants are following these guidelines under these circumstances there should be every reason our churches could do the same. Most of the churches in Westcliffe require masking as it is done in restaurants. Some require no masks and others allow people to be adults and make their own decisions.
- We comply with social distancing. We have never seen anybody moving furniture around in violation of social distancing.
- Social distancing is followed in our church services.
- Deacon Richard was required to read your letter. Fr. Tony should have been up there with him as your representative. Fr. Tony let us all down.
- You had the audacity to send **armed** security into our church with loaded pistols hanging on their waists. What were you thinking???? Their presence was akin to experiencing the Gestapo in Nazi Germany. We do not need their or your "protection." We hope that if these people come back they come to Mass to receive the Eucharist and not bully our parishioners. They are not welcome otherwise.
- When Fr. Tony decided to cancel services, he just walked out. He owed this parish the courtesy of entering the sanctuary and telling us his decision in person. For that he has lost our respect.

We are not sure who or what is giving you guidance regarding Covid protections but you have certainly gone over the top. There are no state or federal laws requiring masking; only suggestions that make sense. Give some consideration to how you are managing this problem. If you are reacting to just a couple of people writing to complain perhaps your best response is to tell them to work it out in their own house with Fr. Stephen rather than you ramming this down our throat.

Signed

Bob Dreher & Carol Kennedy