



12521 Inwood Road
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stritaparish.net

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St. Clare of Assisi

*“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
-Philippians 2:4*

Dear St. Rita Catholic Community:

I hope you all are well, staying spiritually and physically safe! I wanted briefly to communicate to the Parish a few thoughts in light of the [Bishop's guidance](#), offered Tuesday, regarding his delay in lifting the dispensation to attend Sunday Mass and also regarding the wearing of masks.

At St. Rita, since the beginning of the pandemic, we have consistently taken guidance from recognizable authorities and experts. Foremost for us, of course, is the guidance of the Bishop. Personally, I am grateful for his leadership, and I think his recent guidance obviously prudent. This recent wave of the [delta variant](#) (which is nearly twice as contagious as previous Covid variants) demands we act now to stifle, as much as possible, unnecessary spread. As Catholics we have a moral obligation to do what we can to help fight this virus in our churches and communities. I certainly understand the fatigue of it all; I am desperate to return to normal. However, the fight simply is not over, and we cannot pretend it is.

Because of protocols still in place at St. Rita, there is little we need to change. Mostly, we need to renew our diligence in doing those things which have kept us safe thus far. **As I have urged previously, if coming to Mass at St. Rita, I ask you to:**

- Abide by all signage and all directions given by ushers, clergy, or security officers.
- Please wear a mask.
- Practice personal hygiene. That is, wash your hands regularly, make use of hand sanitizers, cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Practice physical distance.
- But also, if you are at “increased risk” for severe illness as defined by the CDC, then please stay home. The CDC details who are considered “higher risk” on their [website](#).
- And, if you are feeling ill or have been exposed to someone who has been feeling ill, please stay home and join us for our live stream of Mass.

Now given the reality of this current wave of the pandemic, adding to these practices, are a few points worth emphasis:

Participating in Mass from home. We will continue to livestream the 5:00pm Vigil Mass each Saturday evening. We are also looking into livestreaming even more Masses although such plans are not yet final. Thanks to the generosity of the Catholic Foundation, [Mass is also televised each Sunday morning](#): in Spanish on Univision 23 at 8:00am and in English on KDFI 27 at 11:00am.

Limited capacity, physically distanced seating remains in place. As you know, we still have physically distanced seating available. We will monitor Masses to determine if such seating needs to be increased.



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Also, we will monitor capacity at each Mass. As you come to church, if you see signage stating, "Mass is full," then know we've decided to cap attendance for that particular Mass. Please accept our apologies and come back at another time. Also, please be mindful of other parishioners' personal space.

On wearing masks. Given what medical experts strongly recommend, Bishop Burns has made it clear that for those attending Mass in person "masks are expected to be worn." Vaccinated or not, it's clear that wearing masks helps keep not only yourself safe, but it also helps keep others safe. The Bishop is right to say wearing masks should be "**worn out of charity for others,**" and so I ask you (as one who dislikes wearing them!) please wear a mask when attending Mass, at the very least out of charity for others.

On vaccines. [Numerous authorities](#) in the Church from Rome to Dallas have encouraged all the Faithful to get vaccinated. I need not rehearse what should, by now, be clear and obvious counsel. The Church has supported vaccinations of all kinds for centuries, really since the beginning of vaccines, and continues to do so in the face of this pandemic. **The Church is clear: getting vaccinated against Covid is morally licit and "an act of charity that serves the common good."** Do not be dangerously fooled by misinformation. Please seek out real medical advice. Vaccinations are our best weapon against this pandemic. And there is nothing about the Catholic faith that obscures that fact.

All of that said, I want to conclude by saying THANK YOU to all. Individually and collectively, since this pandemic began in March 2020, St. Rita Catholic Community has conducted itself in genuine charity and heroically, always arguing and asking in love what's the best way forward. For your wonderful ideas, your support, your prayer, your contributions, volunteering to serve others, I am truly thankful. It really has been a joy to serve you, even in these difficult times. This will end, but we must be faithful, stay strong, and keep going. So, let's do that, for the love of all and for the glory of God and St. Rita.

pax,
Fr. Joshua