



St. Matthew's Catholic Church

1000 Butler Spaeth Rd.
Gillette, WY 2716
307.682.3319

5/8/2020

Dear friends in Christ,

It is so exciting for me to see some light at the end of the long COVID-19 tunnel. The road that lies ahead will undoubtedly bring its challenges and difficulties, but we are beginning the process of re-opening and discovering how things will work in light of the pandemic.

We started with the individual celebration of Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick on May 1. We are continuing to celebrate these Sacraments by appointment.

Our next level of opening will come on May 16. According to protocols set by the Diocese of Cheyenne, we are able to begin celebrating sacraments with a very limited number of people. This includes Baptism, Matrimony, funerals and Mass. Here is our plan:

- Beginning Monday, May 18, we will resume our regular weekday Mass schedule, Monday-Friday at 9 a.m. and Tuesday-Thursday at 5:15 p.m. We are able to celebrate with a maximum of 25 people at these Masses. We will need to observe 6' social distancing between households or individuals and the use of face masks. We will not be able to offer the Blood of Christ, and the reception of the Body of Christ will be in the hand.
- At the weekend liturgies at St. Matthew's on May 16-17, May 23-24 and May 30-31 we are also limited to 25 in attendance, so we will be celebrating these Masses only with our First Communion and RCIA families. This way, we will be able to keep the gatherings within the established numbers, we will be able to "catch up" with the first communicants and RCIA folks, and it will help to make things a little smoother in the next phase of reopening.
- We will celebrate Reconciliation in the Church on Saturdays from 3 to 4:30 p.m., beginning Saturday, May 16. Due to social distancing requirements, we will not be able to line up at the back of the church. Masks are also required.
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be opening Monday, May 18 at midnight. We are asking that participants in Adoration sign up for a time, and you will be able to get an access door code. We are required to ensure 6' distancing between households or individuals. As a result, we are not able to open Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to drop ins. To sign up for Adoration, please call Evelyn Rothleutner, 299-9831, or Colleen Chaulk, 682-5867 or 660-3448.

According to protocols set by the Diocese of Cheyenne, the next phase is planned for June 1, when we will be able to fully open to the public celebration of Mass. That will bring with it a number of protocols designed to keep everyone as safe as possible. I will be sending out a second letter detailing how that will work.

General protocols as set by the State Department of Health and the Diocese of Cheyenne for all sacraments and gatherings include:

- If you are sick, symptomatic or have been exposed to COVID-19, stay home. When you are sick, there is no sin in missing Sunday Mass. In addition, the dispensations not requiring participation in Sunday Mass will continue.
- 6' distancing will be in place in all situations to every extent possible, including the celebration of Mass and all the Sacraments.
- Hand sanitizer will be located at entrances to the church, chapel and Church facilities. You are encouraged to continue to practice good hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer. Feel free to bring your personal-sized hand sanitizer for your own use.
- Face masks will be used. We will have some available for use if you forget to bring one.

As we look forward to June, there are a number of areas that we are working on.

- With the social distancing requirements and the plans that we are developing, we are going to be in need of additional ushers/hospitality ministers. We will be scheduling training for all ushers/hospitality ministers. If you would like to serve in this ministry, please contact the office.
- We will be required to sanitize the church between Masses. We are developing the plan for this, but we will need individuals willing to help after each Mass.
- We will not have music books or misalettes available. We are finalizing plans on how we can continue to have vibrant liturgies with full, conscious and active participation.

We will continue live-streaming the 9 a.m. Sunday Mass for the foreseeable future for those who are not able to be in attendance for the celebration, either due to numbers or those who do not feel comfortable or are unable to attend.

These have been, and continue to be, challenging times for all of us. Never forget that Jesus Christ is with us and continues to lead us. Please pray for our Bishop and his team, myself and our local team, and our entire parish family. Know of my continued prayers for each of you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Cliff Jacobson