

## From the Bishop

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick  
The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i



July 7, 2020

### A Message from the Bishop

*“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”*

Matthew 22:25-40

*“Examine your lives and conduct by the rule of God's commandments, that you may perceive wherein you have offended in what you have done or left undone, whether in thought, word, or deed. And acknowledge your sins before Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life, being ready to make restitution for all injuries and wrongs done by you to others; and also being ready to forgive those who have offended you, in order that you yourselves may be forgiven. And then, being reconciled with one another, come to the banquet of that most heavenly Food.”*

From “An Exhortation,”

The Book of Common Prayer (1979), page 317

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Aloha my dear Siblings in Christ Jesus,

This passage from the Gospel of Matthew and this paragraph from The Book of Common Prayer come to mind when I get questions about wearing masks, practicing social distancing and not singing hymns during in-person worship services in the Diocese. I know that for some wearing a mask is uncomfortable. It is only for the short time of the liturgy. If one has a medical condition that precludes them from wearing a mask for the time of worship, I hope that person will stay home and join one of the many virtual worship opportunities that are available. I know folk miss singing and our engagement with one another. This is an unusual time.

Please understand, as your Bishop, I expect everyone present during worship in this Diocese to wear masks, practice social distancing, regularly wash hands, and not sing hymns during in-person worship services in the Diocese. We are doing this as a witness to the Great Commandment (noted above from Matthew's Gospel). We are trying to love our neighbor as ourselves. Frankly, I would hope that Episcopalians are making these practices part of their daily life even when we are in worship. It is a basic moral responsibility, and a reflection of our duty to God and neighbor.

It is part of the required examination needed before we receive Holy Communion. “An Exhortation” found on pages 316-317 of the Prayer Book gives the need for examination a theological basis. For me personally, I try to engage the daily practice Ignatian “Examen” (see

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/>). You can download a pdf of an Examen Prayer Card at <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/examen-prayer-card/> for easy use. Yes, I think at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, wearing a mask, maintaining social distancing and diligently washing hands are spiritual disciplines that ought to be included in our daily review of life.

“No ia mea, e nā hoahānau, e kūpa‘a ‘oukou, me ka nāueue ‘ole, me ka ho‘omau i kā ‘oukou hana nui ‘ana i ka hana a ka Haku, no ka mea, ua ‘ike nō ‘oukou, ‘a‘ole i make hewa kā ‘oukou hana ‘ana ma ka Haku.” Korineto I 15:58

“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

Aloha ma o Iesu Kristo, ko mākou Haku,

+Bob

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