

CLUSTER 28 TRANSITION COMMITTEE
St. Joseph Parish, St. Patrick Parish, St. Pius X Parish, St. Brigid School

February 22, 2010

Dear Cluster 28 Parishioners,

On the back of this letter is a proposed Mass schedule for our Cluster. The schedule represents my best effort, with the help of the Transition Committee, to make reasonable decisions about a difficult matter in light of the necessity of reducing the number of Cluster Masses. *This schedule is a draft*: I have not made a final determination about all the decisions contained in it – my hope being that we will have further reflection and conversation before finalizing this part of our plan for the future. I remind you too that any changes we make will not go into affect until the middle of next summer at the earliest.

The Mass is at the center of our life as a community of faith. When sharing the Eucharist, we are most aware of how *the Lord is with us* as we gather in Jesus' name. This sacred space is where we lay down our sorrows and gather up our hopes. Coupled with this mystical experience of the Mass are the comfort and familiarity of a particular church and community. No wonder then that change is challenging for us. Few among us will not experience strong feelings of shock, anger and sorrow when we see such changes ahead. These feelings are integral to the grieving process we must all pass through in moving forward.

And yet we must move forward. Somehow in all of this Our Lord is calling us to something new, a something we can only dimly imagine now. Our Lord is calling us to make a new sacred space to be together in when sharing the Eucharist, a sacred space less contingent on a particular building or time or Mass style than on the larger community of faith we are now called to be part of.

In our own prayer, reflection and conversation, the Transition Committee and I have sought first to be guided by the principles I have just articulated about the Mass itself and the positive hope of our future. We have also worked hard to make choices in light of respecting the integrity of all our Cluster communities. Knowing that having fewer priests would necessitate having fewer Masses, we choose to have each parish lose one weekend Mass and work to provide a variety of possibilities for Cluster members that ensure adequate pew space and parking.

In our study of Mass participation, we note that a large number of our parishioners attend the Saturday and Sunday evening liturgies. We propose to preserve all four of these liturgies, moving the 4pm Mass at St. Joseph on Saturday to 5pm to allow two priests to cover the three Saturday Masses and provide an additional time for parishioners. (This is the only time change we have made.) This decision means that each church must lose a Sunday morning Mass. We made our choices for Sunday morning based on a desire to have Masses not conflict with each other or the Religious Education program. Other considerations included the number of worshipers we might need to accommodate, programs like Religious Education and RCIA, and ensuring a variety of possible times and Mass styles.

Much more difficult has been making decisions about the daily Mass schedule. On a given day, about 100-120 people attend three morning Masses at our churches. We first considered having an 8 or 9am Mass at a different church each day. This way of thinking however brought us up short on two counts: 1) it is confusing for parishioners to have to figure out where Mass is on a given day, and 2) parking. As it turns out, the only site that can comfortably accommodate parking at 8 or 9am weekdays for say 80 cars is St. Pius X. Accordingly, we propose a 9am Mass Monday-Friday at St. Pius X. We also propose to continue the school Mass at 8am on Friday and the Saturday 8am Mass at St. Joseph. Because a number of working people have asked for an earlier weekday Mass, we add two Masses for them at 7am at St. Patrick on Tuesday and Thursday. Although St. Pius X is as convenient to most of us as the other churches, I believe daily Mass attendees at St. Joseph and St. Patrick will feel these changes most severely.

Please consider the draft prayerfully in the coming days in light of my words in this letter and with a spirit of compassion and generosity for all of us who feel the grief of these changes. And we are not alone, the Lord is with us in our grieving and will be ever in our midst as long as we gather in peace in His name. I remind you of our upcoming **town hall meeting** to discuss this draft and other Cluster matters at **2pm on Sunday, March 14 at St. Pius X**. Keep us all and this process in your prayers these days.

- Fr. Jim Lafontaine

Draft Schedule of Masses for Cluster 28 Draft

Notes/Guiding Principles

- Reduce Masses so that fewer clergy can serve the Cluster
- Each Parish will lose one weekend Mass
- Provide a variety of times for Cluster members
- Ensure adequate space for attendees and parking

Weekend

Saturday

4:00pm	St. Patrick	One-third of our parishioners generally attend a Saturday vigil Mass Pre-Mass confessions continue before all vigil Masses <u>This time is changed so 2 priests can cover the vigil Masses when necessary</u>
4:30pm	St. Pius X	
5:00pm	St. Joseph	

Sunday

7:00am	St. Pius X	One morning Mass at each site, no conflicts with Religious Ed program
8:00am	St. Joseph	
9:00-10:00am	Religious Education	
10:30am	St. Patrick	
5:00pm	St. Joseph	

Daily

Mon-Fri	9:00am	St. Pius X	On a given day, between 100-120 people currently attend daily Masses Only site with adequate parking, priests not affected by weather issues <u>Workers' Mass</u> (Many working people have requested an early Mass) <u>School Mass</u> (open to all Cluster parishioners)
Tues/Thur	7:00am	St. Patrick	
Friday	8:00am	St. Joseph	
Saturday	8:00am	St. Joseph	
			<u>Eucharistic Adoration</u> from 9:30am-5pm on Friday at St. Pius X <u>Morning Prayer</u> before 9am Mass Mon-Fri <u>Rosary</u> following 9am Mass Mon-Fri

Holy Days

vigil	5:30pm	St. Patrick	One Mass at each site
vigil	7:00pm	St. Joseph	
	9:00am	St. Pius X	

Funeral Masses will be celebrated at all churches as requested by the family, usually at 10 or 11am
Wedding Masses will be celebrated at all churches as requested by the couple, usually mid-day on Saturday