

PASTORAL LETTER REGARDING MASS SCHEDULE

My Dear Parishioners,

Next month, our parish will open its Mass Book. When a parish Mass Book opens to receive intentions, a commitment is made to honor those intentions with scheduled Masses for one full year. Because this commitment is binding, and in light of recent developments regarding priest personnel here at Our Lady of the Assumption, I believe it is necessary at this point to make some adjustments to our parish Mass Schedule.

As you know, we were very blessed to have Fr. Woodeshick serve as Parochial Vicar for almost five years. But because of health issues, he has had to leave OLA to retire to St. Joseph's Villa in Darby, PA. Currently, we are also blessed to have Msgr. Malone as a Resident priest; however, because he is not a Parochial Vicar I, as pastor, cannot bind him to a strict Mass schedule in any way. What Monsignor has done and continues to do, he does so out of charity and for this I thank him. In addition, we have recently invited Fr. Keith Hollis O.S.A. to assist here to help, but again, we must always defer to his busy schedule at Villanova.

Regarding weekend Masses, we currently offer 5 Mass times. Our ushers take count every week and in recent years we have not reached 500 total Mass attendees on any given weekend. Because of this, I would like to reduce the number of our weekend Masses to 4. At this writing, my initial thought is not to change the 5:00 p.m. Saturday night Mass. Rather, I would like to focus on Sunday morning and simply reduce our Masses to 3. How our new Sunday morning Mass schedule will look will involve a dialogue between you and me over the next few weeks.

Also, I must make a pastoral decision regarding the weekday Mass schedule. There will be times when either myself or Msgr. Malone will be away for retreats, vacation time, workshops, etc...and the obligation of the two daily Masses (not to mention funerals) fall on one priest. Of course, there is the possibility of securing outside priests to say these Masses but over time I foresee this as getting very tedious to manage and it will only prove costly in the long run as we must not only provide a Mass stipend for an outside priest but an honorarium as well for their time and travel. Therefore, my intention is to reduce our 2 daily Masses (6:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.) to only one (8:00 a.m.).

I want you to know that I do not take this decision lightly and I have made it through prayer and candid discussions with Msgr. Malone, members of our Pastoral Council, as well as our parish staff. I know that change is always very difficult but I believe that these adjustments must happen sooner than later, especially in light of the Mass book opening for the January 2020 year and the commitment to honor any Masses offered to the faithful.

With all this being said, we will be taking a poll regarding our Sunday Mass schedule over the next few weeks. I thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter and please don't hesitate to speak to me about any concerns or suggestions you might have. Again, as a pastor, these decisions are not easy but I truly believe that these changes will be for the benefit and harmony of our parish as we prepare for the future.

Sincerely yours,

Father Carey