

September 9, 2018
Mass Times & Fireside Chat

THE CATHOLIC PARISHES

St. Irenaeus, Oakmont, St. Januarius, St. John the Baptist,
Our Lady of Joy, Plum, St. Joseph, Verona
www.opvcatholic.org



CLERGY

Group Email: office@opvcatholic.org

Rev. Kevin G. Poecking
Priest Administrator

Rev. George Dalton
Senior Parochial Vicar

Rev. David DeWitt
Senior Parochial Vicar

Rev. Frederick Gruber
Parish Chaplain

Deacon Joseph Vannucci

Deacon Timothy Noca

Explanation of the Grouping Logo

*There are five parishes
in our new grouping.*

*There are five fingers of a hand that
reaches out to greet a new soul.*

*Each of the fingers has the name of a
parish, with St. Joseph on the thumb
since it is the original church in this area,
historically leading us all.*

*With one hand, we receive God's blessing,
with one hand together,
we can do the work of God.*

HOW DID WE GET THE INTERIM MASS SCHEDULE?

It's difficult to establish a schedule without being able to consult with people in the parishes that it affects. So, along with the release of the Interim Mass Schedule this weekend in our grouping of parishes, I wanted to at least share some of the rationale that went into it. I also met with each current pastor to discuss options for the reduced Mass schedule. I must emphasize that it is only an *interim* schedule. That means we can change it within the next six months. However, we can't change our constraints:

- We are limited to 12 weekend Masses in our 5 buildings.
- The logistics necessary for each priest to get to 3 Masses must also take into consideration the health and ability of each priest.
- There are building size and parking lot limitations.
- Some parishes have street parking or folks who walk to Church.
- We must have at least one weekend Mass in every Church.
- Our grouping of parishes currently offers 16 weekend Masses every week plus one Sunday night Mass per month.

What our incoming group of clergy discussed was to remove one weekend Mass at each parish and increase the availability of Sunday night Mass (see back). Along with this, we took into consideration the Religious Education/CCD schedule and weddings planned in 2019. We have the "north" including St. Irenaeus and St. Joseph which are very close to each other and the "south" parishes in Plum which are all relatively close.

Keeping the Saturday night Masses at four of the parishes is preferred because of the large amount of attendees, though we need to widen the time differential between St. Irenaeus and St. Joseph to allow time for a priest to get between those two locations.

For Sunday morning, we tried to minimize the change to the fewest churchgoers, but again, will need to widen the time differential between St. Joseph and St. Irenaeus to accommodate not only the priest travel, but to allow for families who go to Religious Education on Sunday to be able to get to Church before or after Mass.

The changes at St. Januarius are the most significant. Not only is the Saturday night Mass discontinued, but the morning Mass time is being moved to an earlier time. The small building size makes it difficult to use St. Januarius Church for a Mass time when many people want to attend because it can't hold as many people. We will be reviewing this change very carefully and I'd like to meet with folks at St. Januarius to see if they have alternatives that might work. We'll look into needs at other locations as well.

Thank you all for your patience and understanding on all this.

~In Christ's love, Father Kevin

Regarding Sunday Night Mass and Spanish Mass

The Latino/Spanish Mass has been offered during the academic year, usually one Sunday at the end of the month. This will continue. However, we will be



filling in all the other Sundays of the month with Masses in English. This way, anyone who needs to have Sunday night as an option to fulfill the Sunday obligation can do so in our grouping.

Because St. John the Baptist Church is the most centrally located, we decided to move the Mass from Our Lady of Joy to St. John. This will be an adjustment for the Latino community and those at OLOJ who help with their ministry. Anyone in our five parishes who is willing to help with the Latino ministry and the Sunday night Mass in Spanish or English is welcome to do so. We look forward to having the wider group of parishes support this important ministry for many who are natives or children of another land and for those who prefer this evening time for Mass. It will be at 6:00 p.m. Sunday.

We may also offer a bilingual Mass occasionally so that both Latinos and Anglos can worship with some familiarity at the same Mass. Again, this is an interim schedule, so if we need to change this again, we can in the next several months.

Weekday Masses & Confession Schedule

While we have 4 priests available for weekend Masses, one of those priests is assigned to cover nursing and care homes in Eastern Allegheny county and is unavailable to the parishes during the week. Therefore, we have only 3 priests available for weekday Masses. Based on past history, we also estimate that 4 to 5 days will require a priest to celebrate a funeral.

Therefore we will only have two weekday Masses which will be a great adjustment for daily Massgoers because there are currently five weekday Masses. We have three schools to serve and they currently have school Masses at 9 a.m. Monday through Friday. We divided the 9 a.m. time to serve all three schools. The remaining weekday Mass will allow for two evening Masses (one in the 'north' (Oakmont & Verona, and one in the 'south' Plum area) with confessions in the evening also, and we will have an early Mass time (7:30 a.m.) in the 'south' when the school Masses in the 'north' are at 9 a.m. We plan to have two priests available for confession on Saturday mornings.

A popular trend is to offer "family" confession time, with some child care and fun kid activities so that parents can go to confession while children learn faith and/or play. We hope to offer this if there are willing childcare providers.



Fireside Chats Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have already witnessed great things at each of our parish communities. I have met most of the staff and many parishioners. Of the ones I have met and with myself and the clergy included, there is a mixture of fear and worry, coupled with excitement and hope. One of the elements that helps to reduce the fear and worry is getting to know one another. That will begin in a more serious way in October, but even then it will be challenging. There will be 3-4 priests visiting different Churches throughout the week. Most of us are used to the same priest/community relationship week after week. That will change as each of the priests modifies his schedule each weekend. As separate parishes, we are still somewhat divided by our locations and our familiar routines.

What I propose is to enhance our existing livestreaming service to broadcast Mass online. For those unaware, the 9 a.m. Mass at St. John the Baptist is available live every day. That will continue to follow wherever the 9 a.m. Mass is each day and we can livestream other events at each Parish as well.

So that we can get to know one another better, starting this week, I will offer livestream broadcasts called **"Fireside Chats" every Tuesday night at 7:30 p.m. and viewable at OPVCatholic.org**. Parishioners from any parish in our grouping may submit questions by calling 412-793-4511 or email office@OPVCatholic.org. An interviewer will be on hand each week to ask me some of the questions. In the future we can have some of the other priests, deacons or lay ministers be interviewed so that everyone in all parishes can get to know us, even if only electronic and remotely, for now. Please note that I will not accept any questions from anyone who does not identify himself/herself. The same is true for letters. If you want me to read a letter, whether personal or for the fireside chat time, it needs your name attached. I want to get to know real people. This On Mission process, especially in our grouping is an enormous task. Let's continue to move forward with prayer and

~ In Christ's love, Father Kevin