

Dear Parishioners,

It has been three months since we implemented the current mass schedule. As a part of the changes to the mass schedule, a rotation of weekday masses was created to accommodate our partnered parishes' secondary churches. I believe that these changes need to be reviewed and adjusted.

Currently there is a mass at a secondary church on Monday and Wednesday evening at 5:30pm. These mass times, along with travel and activities at the churches, means the priest is not available until 7:30pm to hold any other meeting. Along with the priest's other responsibilities there is not enough time to hold evening meetings and have a healthy work life.

Therefore, beginning January 1, 2027 the Wednesday evening mass time will be eliminated. This will result in Holy Trinity, Immaculate Conception, St. Mary, and St. Severin having one mass a month on Monday evening at 5:30pm. To balance out the weekday mass count at St. Agnes, St. Basil, and Christ the King church an 8:30am mass would be added on Wednesday, along with the 8:30am mass at Christ the King when both priests are present in the parish. This will result in two masses a week at the primary churches and one mass a month at the secondary churches.

The second issue that needs to be addressed is how weekday masses are being handled at our secondary churches. When a church, no matter the location, only has a weekday mass, the mass does not replace the obligation to attend mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation. An ordinary weekday mass does not have a collection nor does a person need to pick up a bulletin since both actions have occurred when a person attended Sunday mass. If a person attended a Sunday mass at another parish, a bulletin can be picked up and the donation can be dropped into the Sunday collection the following week. In our partnered parishes, if a person cannot get to our weekend masses, then our bulletin is available online at our website cpoecc.org. Donations can be dropped off at the shared office in Houtzdale or mailed to the office at 123 Good St. Houtzdale, PA 16651. A donation can also be made electronically through our website.

Therefore, beginning the week of October 18 we will not be taking up a collection nor bringing bulletins to any secondary churches. It is assumed that people are going to Sunday mass where bulletins are picked up and donations are deposited in the collection.

Fr. Pius and I want to be clear to everyone by our common weekday mass practice that a mass on Monday through Friday, no matter where it happens, does not substitute for the Sunday or Saturday vigil mass.

This may seem like an unnecessarily strong response to simple issues like bulletins or donations. The primary issue is people not attending Sunday or Saturday vigil mass. Bulletins and donations are addressed at that mass. Needing them at a weekday mass is indicating by action the person did not go to Sunday mass. According to the teachings of the Catholic Church a person willfully not fulfilling their Sunday obligation (attending mass on Sunday or the Saturday vigil) has committed a mortal sin. Any Catholic who has committed a mortal sin is not

in a state of grace and cannot receive holy communion until the sin is confessed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

I do not want there to be any confusion about the status of weekday masses or make it seem unimportant to persistently skip Sunday mass. For a Roman Catholic, the most common regular action of public faith that the Church instructs us to do is to attend mass on Sunday or the Saturday vigil and attend mass on Holy Days of Obligation.

I want us to grow in our practice of the faith. The practice does take some sacrifice. Perhaps in our current reality we do not have the time or location of mass that we want. Is God and His Church valuable enough to sacrifice some time to be present at any Sunday mass? Each person can only answer this question for oneself. As Pastor, as Father, I am stating what the Catholic Church teaches is the expected action of a follower of Jesus in our faith.

May the Holy Spirit help us fulfill God's will.

Peace in Christ,

Fr. Johnathan Schmolt
Pastor