

Moving Forward Together as One Parish Family

As I have shared in recent bulletin articles, by 2030 our diocese expects to have only about 30 diocesan priests available to cover Masses across all parishes. Because of this, the Diocese of Gary is restructuring parish groupings and priest assignments so that the number of Masses offered matches the number of priests and the level of actual parish participation. These changes are intended to ensure that all communities in the diocese continue to have long-term access to the sacraments—though perhaps in a different church or at a different time than they are used to.

We have been instructed to adapt our weekend Mass schedule accordingly. The goal is to “right-size” our schedule so that it reflects the number of active parishioners and prepares us for the possibility of having only one priest serving our community in the future. It would not be helpful—or sustainable—if every time a priest is reassigned we had to create a new Mass schedule. That would mean rewriting the schedule if Fr. Jordan were moved, again in 2027 when Fr. Zach completes his assignment, and once more if and when St. Stanislaus joins our parishes. Constantly changing the schedule would create far more confusion than making one comprehensive, long-term adjustment now—a change that may feel difficult at first, but allows us to move forward and focus on the more important work of ministry and mission.

While the new schedule does reduce the total number of weekend Masses, it is designed to provide long-term stability. My hope is that by making these adjustments now, we can avoid revisiting these decisions every few months and instead focus our energy on building up the life and ministry of our parish.

This also represents a meaningful shift in how we understand the Catholic community here in Michigan City. We can no longer operate as three—or even four—separate parishes. We are becoming one parish family. That means if the Saturday evening Mass is celebrated at Notre Dame, it is *our parish's* vigil Mass for all three communities. Likewise, Sunday morning Masses—whether celebrated at Queen of All Saints or St. Mary—belong to all of us as one parish community. I know this is a paradigm shift, but it is one taking place throughout the diocese and across the country due to the number of priests available to serve parishes.

I understand that change like this can be challenging, especially when it touches something as central to our lives as the Mass. Yet I truly believe these adjustments will strengthen our unity, stabilize our ministry, and secure a strong Catholic presence in our area for generations to come.

Thank you for your understanding, flexibility, and faith as we continue moving forward together.

From the Pastor

Preparing for Christmas with Mary

During this Advent season, our parish small groups are exploring the theology of Mary as revealed in Sacred Scripture. There is no better way to prepare for Christmas than by reflecting on her life and example.

Mary was the first to live an Advent—nine months of joyful anticipation as she awaited the moment she would hold her Son, Jesus, in her arms. St. Joseph soon joined her in this first Advent, sharing in her hope and expectation. If we wish to live Advent well, we can look to Mary and Joseph as our models.

To help all of us enter more deeply into this season, I invite every parishioner to make a simple Advent resolution: pray at least **one decade of the Rosary each day**. After Mass today, each family will receive a pamphlet explaining how to pray the Rosary, including the 20 mysteries we meditate upon while praying an Our Father and ten Hail Marys. Whenever possible, I encourage families to pray this decade together.

The Rosary is a powerful prayer. Even one decade a day during Advent can enrich your spiritual life, prepare your heart for Christmas, and teach the importance of personal, devotional prayer. Many people desire a closer relationship with Christ, the saints, and the Church but don't know how to grow in prayer. This simple daily practice is a tangible step toward becoming a person of authentic, heartfelt prayer.

I can only imagine the abundant blessings that will flow in our parish if each of us makes this commitment: **to pray at least one decade of the Rosary daily, and when possible, to pray it with our household.**

Peace to you, and may your Advent be joyful and prayerful.

Fr. Dave