



February 5, 2024

Dear Parishioners,

As Coadjutor Archbishop Coyne prepares to succeed Archbishop Blair on his retirement this spring, an issue that concerns both of them is the number of weekend Masses being celebrated in parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Hartford. Since the attendance at many of these Masses falls well below the “half-full” mark, the Archbishops have addressed this problem in a co-signed letter to all priests. (Their letter in its entirety is available on our website: [saintjohnboscobranford.org](http://saintjohnboscobranford.org).) Some of the major points raised in this letter regarding too many Masses with too few participants are:

- Parish unity is undermined with scattered participants occupying near empty pews
- Additional costs of utilities
- Physical and spiritual health of the priests
- Increasing difficulty in finding substitute priests in the event of illness, retreats, or vacations
- Time spent with parishioners is reduced as priests commute between churches
- Parishes with more than one assigned priest (active, not retired) may soon find themselves with only one priest

A study conducted by the Archdiocese detailed the percentage of Church capacity used per Mass for every parish. The numbers are not encouraging, ranging from 10% usage up to 64%. The attendance count taken last October at St. John Bosco fell somewhere in between, averaging 43%, with 57% capacity for Masses at St. Therese Church and 29% capacity for Masses at St. Mary. The most attended Masses have consistently been the 4:00pm Vigil, and the 9:00am and 10:30am on Sunday. The least attended Mass is the 5:15pm Vigil with only 24% capacity.

Since St. John Bosco Parish is blessed with two church buildings holding large capacities, two Vigil Masses were never necessary once the merger took place. At that time, two Vigils were kept primarily to appease those who resisted additional changes to the combined Mass schedule. After seven years of becoming more accustomed to being one parish, it is time to align our Mass schedule with the Archbishops’ directives and our attendance.

*Beginning the weekend after Easter, on the Feast of Divine Mercy, April 6th, St. John Bosco will celebrate one Vigil Mass at 4:30pm at St. Therese Church.* The Sunday morning schedule will remain unchanged at this time. While the regular attendees of the 5:15pm Vigil will undoubtedly be disappointed by the elimination of that Mass, the decision was based on the low number of worshippers and the directive of the Archdiocese.

The Pastoral Planning within the Archdiocese continues as we prepare for the long-term well-being of our parishes, priests and, most of all, parishioners.

God bless,

Fr. Daniel Keefe, Pastor