



## Our Parish Family Update from Fr. Oakland - August 2025

In July 2024, the Archdiocese of Seattle formed 60 parish families from 136 parishes, 16 missions and 12 stations. Parish Family #28 consists of Our Lady of Sorrows in Snoqualmie, St. Joseph in Issaquah, and Mary, Queen of Peace in Sammamish. These mergers were a milestone in the Partners of the Gospel strategic pastoral planning process focused on reenvisioning parish life. The preeminent question we will keep asking, is how can we look at the resources we have - people, properties, finances - and use them to support the mission of Jesus Christ: to go make disciples? And how can we ensure this mission remains at the heart of the Catholic Church and our life together? Partners in the Gospel is an opportunity to renew our commitment to this mission, while re-envisioning parish life in a new structure.

It's been a year filled with blessings, and challenges as well for everyone, as we adapt to this new current reality, as we begin to become a wider Catholic community and get to know one another and look to the future.

On July 1, 2024, whereas each parish previously had their own pastors, I was appointed as the pastor of all three, assisted by a parochial vicar, Fr. Kyle Poje. Fr. Poje recently returned to his studies in Washington, D.C., and Fr. Randy Guarino was appointed by the Archbishop to take his place. The staff are great coworkers in the vineyard of the Lord, and I am grateful for their commitment in helping our parishioners encounter and follow Jesus Christ. We had several all-staff meetings and retreats this year to start getting to know one another, collaborate for ministry, and plan for the year ahead. And an end of the year celebration to just enjoy one another's company as well and bid farewell to Fr. Poje with a game day at the rectory. There has been a sizeable number of staff transitions as well, with just over a dozen changes throughout the family. I am grateful to those who have joined us, and grateful for the patience as we find our way through these transitions.



During this last year, in addition to regular staff meetings at each parish, I have also been meeting with each of the parish's Parish and Finance Councils, as well as the St. Joseph School Commission. I have also been meeting with a Leadership Team comprised of my assistant, Ann Shikany, as well as a key staff member from each parish - Tom Walker, the PAA at St. Joseph; Beth Kim, the Director of Operations at MQP; and Carmela Wolf, the Parish Life and Liturgy Directory at OLOS.

I am also grateful to the many volunteers who share their gifts and talents in love and service of one another and our neighbors. They are essential to our life together and continuing our mission. Thank you especially to all who have stepped in to fill in the gaps that have been a part of this transition.

The shift from three priests to two meant a need for changing the Mass schedule. After consulting the staff, I surveyed parishioners and spent time looking through the 876 responses to understand the various trends based on the various proposed schedules. The loss of a Saturday Vigil at SJ meant several parishioners started attending OLOS or MQP, with the total Sunday Mass count throughout the family being about the same as it was before the changes. It has been wonderful to see parishioners attending Mass at other parishes within the family, with a greater sense of the wider Catholic community. I have also greatly enjoyed having dinner with families and beginning to share in one another's lives.

When I arrived, the Archbishop asked Fr. Poje and I to live together to have a priestly community and fraternity in the midst of our labors. Mary, Queen of Peace had yet to buy or build a rectory and was renting an adjacent condo that we gave up the lease on. The Snoqualmie rectory was too small for both of us, plus a chapel, plus a room for guest priests or family visits. It also needed significant repairs already. And so, this March we sold the rectory, with the funds remaining with OLOS, but a sizable portion designated for permanent rectory needs. We are currently looking at whether a significant remodel can be completed at the St. Joseph rectory to meet this layout in a more cost-efficient way than the alternative of needing to buy a home. Once we have more information, I will be able to discern a path forward with our various parish consultative bodies as we look at all the options. In the meantime, we are renting a house in Sammamish.

This last year the focus was just on the transition itself. As we begin our second year in the Partners in the Gospel journey, we will begin to more earnestly and intentionally gather together and discern where the Lord is calling us.

	Mary Queen of Peace		Our Lady of Sorrows		St. Joseph	
	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25	23-24	24-25
<b>Sacraments</b>						
Infant Baptism	14	24	7	6	27	12
1st Communion	42	42	21	19	57	53
Confirmations	64	58	25	11	43	32
Marriages	7	4	1	1	6	1
Funerals	19	12	7	9	17	18
Confessions	1,380	1,267	260	346	1,270	1,080
<b>People</b>						
Total Masses	9	8	5	3	8	6
Mass Attendance - Fall	932	1,024	255	278	739	692
Mass Attendance - Spring	1,098	1,142	268	279	794	722
<b>Money</b>						
Parish Ordinary Inc	1,485,940	1,474,036	351,068	345,713	1,197,423	1,047,650