

CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION AND ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

The following questions are ones that have been posed to Cluster Committee and Parish Staff members. Some can be answered completely now, while other details will be worked out in the coming months. We are committed to good communication and transparency. Please keep your questions coming!

NEW QUESTION

Are the deacons going to preach at both churches?

Yes, they will. Fr. Rob has already met with deacons Eric Bessette, Kevin Carges, and Pat DiLaura to work out the preaching schedule through the summer and fall. Since Fr. Rob also prefers to have a deacon assisting at all weekend Masses, the schedule of which deacon will serve on the Altar each weekend has also been created. Transfiguration parishioners will have their first opportunity to meet Deacon Kevin Carges the weekend of June 26-27 when he serves on the Altar at all Masses at both churches. St. Catherine's parishioners will meet Deacon Eric Bessette the weekend of July 10-11 and Deacon Pat DiLaura the weekend of July 24-25. We look forward to Deacon Jim Carra's return to ministry as his health allows.

PREVIOUS QUESTIONS

Why isn't Transfiguration just getting its own Pastor to replace Fr. Mike when he retires?

Put most succinctly, we do not have enough priests to continue life as we have known it. **Our diocese has 64 parishes or clusters needing a Pastor**; some of these parishes and clusters include so many churches—or are so large—that an assisting priest is needed. Only 38 of our Pastors are younger than 70.

Our diocesan clergy are aging, and the number of those being ordained does not equal the number of priests moving into senior priest status, getting seriously sick, or dying. The diocese currently has 55 priests under the age of 70. There are 32 priests between the ages of 70 and 75, although some of these are not able to minister. 54 are over age 75, some of them still in active ministry.

59 diocesan priests currently have senior status, a group Fr. Mike Bausch will be joining in June. "Senior status" is similar to what the rest of us call "retirement." Priests in senior status choose where, how, and when they want to minister. The Bishop does not appoint them to particular ministries or parishes. Their generosity supports those priests in active ministry and allows parish communities to have Masses when assigned priests are sick or away for vacations or retreats.

MASS AND OTHER SACRAMENTS

Will Masses continue to be livestreamed?

Yes. Our intent is to livestream the 8:45 am Mass at Transfiguration and the 10:45 am Mass at St. Catherine.

Will daily Mass still be held at both churches?

Yes. Beginning Monday, June 21, the daily Mass schedule will be Mondays and Wednesdays 6:45 am at Transfiguration with Masses Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 am at St. Catherine.

When will Confession times be?

The sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered Saturdays at 3:00 pm at Transfiguration and by appointment at either parish (contact Fr. Rob at 624-4990).

How will Masses on Holy Days, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the Triduum, and Easter be scheduled?

Much depends on whether Fr. Rob will be assisted by a retired priest (which is highly likely). If a second priest is available, we expect that the Mass schedule will be similar to what it has been in the past. If Fr. Rob is the only priest, he will need to consult with both staffs and those involved in preparing the liturgy to choose the best schedule possible. Mass times and locations will be communicated to parishioners when they are determined.

What will happen with music at Masses?

With much prayer, thought and consideration, our Music Directors (Sue Wallace at Transfiguration and Pam McNerney at St. Catherine) have consulted with each other and with members of their music ministry to share ideas and possibilities for the future. They heartily agree on welcoming anyone from either church who wants to sing or play at the Masses. We have been blessed this past year with music recorded by our combined choirs, and we hope to continue to offer a variety of music styles to support the prayer of our parishioners.

FAITH FORMATION/SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION

Faith formation and sacramental preparation are important ministries of both of our parishes. We are fortunate to have talented staff and parishioners involved in this work. In particular, Anne Gallagher, Karen Luke, and Vicky Wejko have long worked together well, shared ideas, and supported one another. They hope to meet together soon to begin imagining possibilities for the future. We expect that each parish will be strengthened by the gifts of the other as we are linked under our shared pastor, Fr. Rob.

What will happen with Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Communion?

Sacramental preparation will ordinarily continue to happen at each parish, although we will likely look for opportunities to collaborate between St. Catherine and Transfiguration. The sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Communion will continue to be celebrated in each person's home parish unless different accommodations need to be made for particular families.

AVAILABILITY OF FR. ROB

What if I need to speak to Fr. Rob—how can I get in touch with him?

Fr. Rob welcomes all his new parishioners! He can be reached by phone at 624-4990 or by email at fr.rob.bourcy@dor.org. To reach him in an emergency, please call 269-9828.

Will Fr. Rob have hours at both parishes?

Yes. Beyond Masses, he will be regularly at both parishes—meeting with parishioners and staff, attending meetings and programs.

FINANCES

If I attend Mass at the other parish, what happens to the money I put in the collection basket?

Many of our parishioners contribute to their parish through online giving. If you use a collection envelope, though, and put it in the basket at the other parish, it will be returned to your own parish. If your donation is cash, it will stay with the parish you visit unless you place cash in an envelope labeled for your own parish.

OTHER

What will happen with our deacons?

Fr. Rob has already met once with Deacons Eric Bessette, Kevin Carges, and Pat DiLaura to work out the preaching schedule for the coming months, and their future responsibilities will continue to be worked out. All are on board and looking forward to getting to know each other's community. We look forward to Deacon Jim Carra's return to ministry as his health allows.

Can parishioners who volunteer divide their time between the two churches or can they choose to volunteer only at their own parish?

Both communities value the participation of parishioners that allows such a flourishing of ministries. Right now, Margie Benza and Sr. Ruth Maier are reaching out to liturgical ministers, while Pam McInerney and Sue Wallace are in contact with music ministers. Parishioners can choose how and when they will volunteer.

Is the job of the Clustering Committee done now that Mass times have been decided? What else will you help decide? How long will you continue to meet?

The work of the Clustering Committee will likely carry on at least through the summer. Beyond continuing to coordinate regular, transparent, two-way communication with parishioners and staffs, the committee will do everything it can to ensure a smooth transition into Fr. Rob's new role and the new relationship between St. Catherine and Transfiguration.

How are we changing?

Up until now, each parish has had its own Pastor, even as we collaborated with each other and with other neighboring communities such as St. Louis. From June 29 onward, we will remain two separate entities under both church and secular law. However, Transfiguration will be adjusting to the end of Fr. Mike's longtime pastorate; St. Catherine will be adapting to sharing their Pastor, Fr. Rob. We will be keeping our own identities but, at the same time, developing a new, shared identity. Much like two individuals getting married remain separate persons but begin to develop a new, shared identity as a married couple, we will be balancing our individual parish identities with our identity as clustered parish communities.