

May 23-24, 2015

Thoughts from the pastor,

The Sunday morning Mass times will switch to 8am and 11am as of June 6-7. Mark this on your calendars and tell your neighbors and relatives that come occasionally. I am sure that there will be confusion but hopefully we can keep it to a minimum. The 5:30pm Mass on Saturday and Sunday will stay the same.

As I had warned previously there will also be a change in the weekday Mass schedule. I have been talking to people, including the Parish Council, about options. Of course there are a hundred opinions and there are many factors to take into consideration. The main one that brought the whole issue up was that I will no longer have a full-time Associate Pastor assigned to the parish as of July 1st. As you have heard Fr. John will be heading back to Togo, West Africa and Fr. Don Cleary will be taking his place but will be a retired priest that will be in residence here at SEAS. Fr. Don is willing to help out with Masses but wisely has set some limits. At 70 years old he is willing to do a Mass a day but wants to have a day off per week in which he can refresh mind, body, and soul.

God commands that we do that but for priests it is a little different because we can't do it on Sunday. I know for myself most Sundays I put in a ten hour day. But this means we are sinning when we don't do a day off from our normal work. Fr. Don and I have both been in the habit of trying to take Mondays off.

I don't know how that has worked out for him but for me it has been sinful. I have Mass. Then because people see me they come and start talking business. Within minutes I have problems to solve and I don't get away. I am not joking when I say that as SEAS I have considered my day off successful if I only worked six to eight hours. By the way a "normal" day is ten to fourteen hours. Just like today, I had 6:30am confessions, 7am Mass, office work until leading an hour of prayer at Planned Parenthood at 11am. Then I was back in the office until Mass at the nursing home at 3:30pm, Mass at 5:30pm at Notre Dame Convent/nursing home, a wake service at 6:30pm and then marriage prep from 7:30-9:30pm.

With this in mind I thought of just canceling the Monday Masses. The problem with that is there is always something that comes up in a parish like SEAS so even if we were free to go somewhere for a few hours, because we didn't have a scheduled Mass, we would be called back more times than not anyway. After discussing it with Fr. Don he decided to try and take Friday off and leave Monday for me. That solved one problem because we would still have a Mass every day in the parish. But it doesn't solve the other problem in that priests are not supposed to be doing three or more Masses per day like I am doing today and this is just Thursday and I don't have a school Mass this week. After praying about this for the last few months, talking to Fr. Cleary, the Archbishop, and the Parish Council, I have decided that I am going to protect our days off better by canceling a Mass on Monday and on Friday. It will not solve the problem overloading on Masses on other days but at least there will be a planned day of rest.

So starting July 1st there will not be confessions and Mass on Monday mornings. That will help with my day off. To help with Fr. Don's day off there will not be evening confessions or Mass on Friday evenings. This might also help with some of the times when we have to cancel Friday evening Mass because of weddings or wedding rehearsals. The problem that it will create is that many people from northwest Omaha take advantage of the 5pm confessions and 5:30pm Mass, but their outcry was not as loud as those from the morning Mass attendees. The closest evening Mass options are St. Pius X and St. Roberts. The one option that I haven't made a decision on is whether it will be possible to have Friday evening Mass during Lent. That is months away.

God bless you all,
Fr. Frank