



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST Catholic Church & School

October 25, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

We've been on the expanded Mass schedule for six weeks with Fr. Tom Lijewski and Fr. Bob Stiefvater helping out on Sundays. During this time, I've taken the early Mass (7:00 a.m.) at SJB and the late Mass (10:30 a.m.) at STA, thereby allowing Fr. Tom and Fr. Bob to adhere to the original Sunday schedule of 8:00 a.m. at STA and 9:30 a.m. at SJB. The advantage with this schedule, as I saw it, was that it minimized the length of "down time" Fr. Tom and Fr. Bob had to spend between Masses (about ninety minutes); the disadvantage (again, from my point of view) was that it kept me from being with the regular attendees at the 8:00 a.m. Mass at STA and the 9:30 a.m. Mass at SJB!

So, after consulting with people at both parishes, I've decided to "tweak" the schedule a little: starting on Sunday, November 8th, the early Mass at SJB is being MOVED BACK to 7:30 a.m. and the late Mass at STA is being MOVED UP to 10:00 a.m.

Once again, beginning Sunday, November 8th, Sunday Masses at St. John the Baptist will be at 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., while Sunday Masses at St. Thomas Aquinas will be at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. (There is no change to the Saturday Mass schedule.)

Under this revised schedule, I will be the celebrant at both Masses at SJB and at STA on alternate Sundays; the Sundays when I am at STA, Fr. Bob or Fr. Tom will have both Masses at SJB, and vice versa. The way this plays out, for those who attend the same Mass each weekend, in any four-week period, you will have Fr. Bob once, Fr. Tom once, and me twice.

On the subject of Mass schedules, let's talk about Christmas. It's only two months away. A lot can happen in two months, but presuming we will still be under the cloud of COVID-19, this is what we're planning: at both St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John the Baptist we will have two Masses on Christmas Eve at 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. On Christmas Day, we will follow the new Sunday Mass schedule: 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. at St. John the Baptist and 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas.

We anticipate that social distancing will still be the order of the day, so an extra measure of patience will be required of everyone, both in getting into Church – anticipating that more people will attend in family units, it may take a bit longer to seat people as we attempt to maximize our use of available space; this, in turn, may cause a bit of queuing at the doors. Please try to avoid bunching too closely to the un-related people in front of you! – and in leaving Church after Mass. Our ushers will try to control the departure-by-pew, but congestion at the exits is going to be terribly difficult to avoid. Again, patience and consideration for the safety of those around us will be of utmost importance at our Christmas celebrations.

Registration for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses at St. John the Baptist will be required; additional information about when and how to register will be sent to SJB parishioners electronically and by snail mail. And all of the above information about Mass schedules will be repeated in multiple formats over the weeks ahead.

Stay healthy. Be safe. And thanks.

Fr. Phil