

Holy Martyrs Parish

Our Lady of Consolation Parish

12 June 2022
Trinity Sunday

Dear Parishioners,

I hope you are enjoying some of our beautiful summer weather. Since my arrival in March, it has been my primary goal to meet as many parishioners as possible as I hope to support the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Catholic community in Merrillville. When I was assigned to shepherd the Merrillville community, I joined an ongoing conversation regarding the viability of our five Merrillville parishes that began over a year ago, following the untimely death of Fr. Meade. I have had the opportunity to meet with the many leaders in our community who participated in this consultative process and members of our Pastoral Councils and many other groups as well. These conversations have **confirmed the wisdom of the decision published by the Bishop on July 1st, 2021, to the effect that all of our Merrillville parishes would become one parish with two sites, in phases over the next year.**

As many of you know, on January 1st, 2022, Holy Martyrs Parish emerged as a new expression of faith, hope, and love out of the former communities of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Ss. Peter and Paul, and Saint Joan of Arc Parishes. On January 9th, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Bishop McClory celebrated the final Mass of Thanksgiving at Ss. Peter and Paul Church. As anticipated, I announced today that **Bishop McClory will celebrate a final Mass of Thanksgiving at 10AM on Saturday July 16th, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, at St. Joan of Arc Church. The community will continue to use the facilities at Holy Martyrs (St. Andrew the Apostle) for Sunday Mass and the parish school for many years to come.**

Today, I also announced some very practical next steps as we move toward our goal of becoming one parish with two sites. Concern about the frequent rotation of guest priests between the parishes has been expressed by some. Given the overall trajectory of the "Merrillville Process," continued low Sunday Mass attendance at both Our Lady of Consolation and Holy Martyrs locations, and the ongoing difficulty in scheduling visiting celebrants, the **Saturday evening and Sunday morning Mass schedule will be consolidated between our two remaining sites.** The new summer Mass schedule respects each parish's previous customs as much as possible while enabling me to celebrate all of the regularly scheduled Masses without regular assistance from visiting priests. **Each parish will go from three weekend Masses to two. Our new Mass schedule will begin on July 1st.**

This next step in our overall process will require flexibility and collaboration from all of us. **We are committed to bringing our communities together so that we might joyfully proclaim Christ with a single voice.** Your participation in this effort to honor long-cherished ministries and traditions from each parish will make both our Holy Martyrs and Our Lady of Consolation sites homes for everyone. Cathy Scolaro, our parish sacristan, will be reaching out to all liturgical ministers to discuss the new schedule. **No ministry, no group, and no tradition will be left behind.** To do this successfully, we must all engage fully in the process and work together to make our new community as bright an experience of faith as each of us has experienced in the past. At a practical level, you may continue to use your current parish envelopes and place them in the basket regardless of the site at which you attend Mass. Your contributions will be accounted for separately.

As I hope you know, I am honored to serve as your pastor. I encourage everyone to practice patience, charity, and open communications during this time of change. I also invite you to share your feelings and thoughts with me. Do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can be of service. I am thankful for the support you have shown to me. May you and your families know of my continued prayers and blessings!

Yours faithfully,



(Father) Ted Mauch
Pastor

Attachment: New Mass Schedule
Enclosure: Bulletin

