

*“The Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.” - Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II*

Dear Parishioners of Our Lady of Peace,

First, know that you have been in my prayers during these times of quarantine and unprecedented change. Thank you for your kind letters, emails, and phone calls over these months. Second, thank you for your continued support in the Offertory. I know the economic impact from the Coronavirus is quite overwhelming for families and individuals. Your continued support of our parish is greatly appreciated.

As you may know, Bishop Brennan has stated that public liturgies may begin on the Solemnity of Pentecost (May 30th/31st). Please keep in mind that Bishop Brennan has granted dispensation from the Sunday obligation through September 13, 2020. If you are sick or in a risk category, I encourage you to stay home. We hope to continue to stream one of our Masses for those who cannot attend Mass. Please remember that you are still connected to the liturgy through spiritual communion.

To help reduce the possibility of spreading the Coronavirus, proper sanitary safeguards will be put into place for the celebration of our liturgies. One of those safeguards is the cleaning of the church after every liturgy. To do this, we have had to adjust our weekend Mass schedule.

I want to share with you our new weekend Mass schedule at Our Lady of Peace Parish. The new weekend Mass schedule is as follows: **Saturday 4:30pm and Sunday 9:30am and 12 noon. The reason for this change is two-fold.**

First, during our Convocation in October the Bishop requested that the priests of the Diocese discuss strategic planning for the future. One of the topics of discussion was the number of Masses and number of priests at each parish. As you can guess, the number of diocesan priests continues to decline in our area. Each deanery (a collection of parishes in the North High Deanery) was asked to collaborate to create a Mass Schedule for the weekends so that more time options would be provided for the faithful throughout the different parishes.

Over the years, I know that Our Lady of Peace Parish has greatly benefited from the ministry of retired priests. However, as the number of retired priests decline, it is both impractical and unfair to rely on our retired priests to provide permanent coverage. Our current weekend Mass schedule reflects a time when the parish had two priests in residence and more retired priests to help.

As I mentioned above, the COVID cleaning protocols require the church building to be cleaned after every Mass. This includes: pews, door handles, restrooms, and other common objects. Our current weekend Mass schedule does not give us enough time to properly clean the Church after each Mass.

One benefit in changing our weekend Mass schedule will directly affect our PSR (Parish School of Religion) Program. This will give parents and students the opportunity to attend Sunday Mass before or after their classes. More information on this will be sent to our catechists and families for next year.

Our weekday Mass schedule will remain the same in the parish: 5:30pm Tuesdays; 8:30am on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. The first weekday daily Mass is scheduled for **Wednesday June 3rd at 8:30am.**

In regards to Confessions, priests have been asked not to hear confessions in our confessionals since the threat of Coronavirus is still present. For now, Confessions will be scheduled by appointment. You can contact me at (614) 263-8824, ext. 202 or by email at: [sdooley@columbuscatholic.org](mailto:sdooley@columbuscatholic.org).

Once we reopen, the use of other liturgical ministers will be as minimal as possible. If you do not have any preexisting health conditions, but would still want to be a Reader or Extraordinary Minister of Communion, please call the Parish Office. The parish staff and other volunteers are busy getting the Church prepared for COVID-readiness. This will be “the new normal” for the foreseeable future. Ushers will provide direction for Holy Communion and for seating arrangements. Masks are strongly encouraged during worship. Seating will be rather limited at Our Lady of Peace due to social distancing. I am not sure what to expect for attendance for our first weekend of worship. We may have to politely turn people away if we are at our capacity. I am sorry if it comes to that point.

Attached to this letter are the protocols for our Parish Office. Please note that it is open to the public by appointment only.

I know that change can be difficult. But through prayer the Holy Spirit will provide the grace necessary to embrace these changes, opportunities to grow in our relationship with Him and the Church. As your Pastor, I look forward to working with you here at Our Lady of Peace as we experience the blessings, challenges, and graces that are present to us. We pray for those who are sick, all healthcare workers, and for all those who are unemployed. May Our Lady of Peace Parish continue to preach the Gospel message and be a symbol of hope in the 21st century.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Sean M. Dooley

Note Well: Our Lady of Peace Parish is introducing a new communication tool called *Flocknote*. It is our hope that this tool will keep you informed of events and announcements in our parish. You can sign up at [https://  
ourladyofpeacechurch.flocknote.com/everyone](https://ourladyofpeacechurch.flocknote.com/everyone) or text to join at olp614 to 84576.

