

# St. Lawrence ~ St. Mary ~ St. Teresa

542 Walnut Street, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com)

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October 15, 2021 (Day 100)

My dear people,

When we first arrived on July 7th, we talked about our first 100 hours. Now, it has been 100 days since the new pastoral arrangement began in Dearborn County: Seven sites, four parishes and two priests. 100 days in and there is no doubt everyone has an opinion on how things are going.

For some of you, it has been a loss:

*Reduction of scheduled weekend and daily Masses that had become your spiritual home*

*Closing of two parish offices*

*The losing of individual bulletins*

*The retirement of the DRE at St. Lawrence*

*The retirement of the secretary and maintenance staff at St. Teresa*

*The resignation of the bookkeeper at St. Teresa*

*The retirement of St. Lawrence Office Manager/Bookkeeper*

*The medical leave of St. Mary's bookkeeper*

*The eventual merging of St. Mary's and St. Lawrence's School (2022/2023 school year)*

*The confusion on our future and identity*

We also hope that for some it is seen as a gain:

*Our church buildings are more full at Mass*

*We have increased the hours available for Confession by over 75%*

*The bulletin is united for easier communication for those attending Mass at a different parish*

*The office staff is united for better collaboration, synergy and financial savings*

*The Anointing of the Sick is being offered publicly each month*

*The homebound and sick are being cared for with great compassion*

*Our beloved dead are being honored with beautiful funerals*

*Baptisms are being scheduled and joyfully celebrated*

*Faith Formation is underway: RCIA, First Communion, Confirmation and Sunday Family Formation and Religious Education*

*Our schools are doing great work*

*We have more altar servers now than in recent memory*

*Youth Ministry has been established and youth are being invited and engaged*

*There is a deeper sense of unity among the Catholic residents of Dearborn Country*

Change is hard and change without explanation is painful. We have attempted to explain many of the adjustments that have taken place, but sometimes things seemed to have moved faster than anticipated. We ask forgiveness for this pain and confusion. We also ask that you allow us to put forth another attempt at some explanations. There was a lot of communication when everything was unveiled in May, June and July, but there was also shock and understandable denial or anger. Know that we understand that this is your faith, your community and your lives. We stand with you in this moment of transition. We are doing all we can to try to make this work and work well. We realize this is hard; we are with you! The purpose of this letter is to bring greater clarity and understanding. Uncertainty brings anxiety, we want to reduce the anxiety by communicating as clearly as we can.

**Weekend Mass Schedule:** The Mass schedule is going well in the sense that people are showing up and engaging in the Holy Mass. Reducing the three parishes to only four weekend Masses has proven to be possible -- not convenient, but possible. We realize that many people are not attending Mass at their parish; even though they desire to and this is painful. Thank you for going to Mass and not giving up! If you have not yet returned to Holy Mass please come home; we have room for you. Please be an evangelist to your family and friends and bring them with you. We realize that many are no longer able to attend Mass at their home parish at a convenient time; we wish this were different.

**Daily Mass Schedule:** Our daily Mass crowd has proven to be resilient. Thank you so much for being so accommodating by attending Holy Mass at different locations and times for the sake of being present at the Sacrifice! If you have never been a daily Mass attendee, please consider joining us!

**Online Homilies:** All of our weekend homilies are online for parishioners to access and share. We are moving forward with advancements in technology to be able to live stream Mass, please be patient as this develops.

**Liturgical Adjustments:** Many things have been adjusted at Holy Mass: new vestment styles, communion patens, chanting, servers, chalice veils, etc. We have written about much of this in the weekly bulletin. If you ever have questions about Holy Mass, please feel free to ask -- we love to talk about Holy Mass.

**Staying for Mass:** We have been asking that all participants remain for the entirety of the closing song and join us for the Prayer to St. Michael. Thanks for being united in this practice.

**Confessions:** We are thrilled with the 12 hours of Confession being offered at St. Mary's every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday and every 1st Friday at St. Martin in Yorkville. The turnout has been grace-filled. We are also blessed with the 30 minutes of confession prior to every Daily Mass. Please know that we *do* leave the confessional prior to Daily Mass after 15 minutes, if no one is in line. If people are still in line, we will continue to hear confessions. Please strive to arrive at the start of the confession time. If you arrive 15 minutes after the start time and no one is in front of you, the priest will not be in the confessional. Also, please note that we prefer to hear confessions anonymously, behind the screen.

**Anointing of the Sick:** In the book of St. James, priests are asked to anoint those who are sick. We are offering this sacrament three times a month in Dearborn County, and we also anoint in times of emergency. Thank you for getting anointed and making yourself available prior to surgeries and medical procedures. The sacrament is offered immediately after these Masses: First Monday - St. Teresa, 5:45pm; First Wednesday - All Saints, St. Joseph Campus, 5:45pm; First Friday - St. Lawrence, 8:30am.

**How do I reach a priest:** Please contact the parish office if you need a priest 812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com) or email one of us ([frmeyer@dcccatholics.com](mailto:frmeyer@dcccatholics.com) / [frmahan@dcccatholics.com](mailto:frmahan@dcccatholics.com)). We also have cell phones that we use - neither of us text!

**Baptisms and Weddings:** Please contact the parish office with any requests for baptisms and wedding dates 812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com). These efforts are being coordinated, scheduled and prepared by one staff person to provide you with the best and consistent service!

**Second Friday Sick Calls:** We are visiting all of our homebound on the second Friday of the month! If you know of someone who needs a home visit please contact the office 812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com). These visits have been lifegiving!

**Funerals:** Please contact the parish office at the notice of a loved one who has died, 812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com); we want to do all we can to serve and minister to you at this special time of need. St. Mary's funeral coordinator is Jim Waldon; St. Teresa and St. Lawrence's funeral coordinator is Mike Lienesch.

**Adoration:** We have added monthly adoration at St. Mary's every third Friday from 9am-9pm and from 9am-12noon every second Friday at St. Lawrence. There is weekly adoration every Wednesday at St. Teresa from 12noon until the evening Mass at 5:45pm. We are looking to extend these opportunities in the near future, so please join us in adoring our Lord!

**Blessings:** We love to bless people and sacramentals. We bless Expectant Mothers four times a year, Engaged Couples on second Sunday's, and Religious Objects (water, oil, candles, salt, and articles of devotion) every third Sunday! Look in the bulletin or online for the schedule.

**First Communion and Reconciliation:** There are six Monday evenings of formation that are given to parents and children in addition to their regular formation in Catholic School, Religious Education, or Homeschool. Please let us know if you have a child in the second grade who needs these first sacraments.

**Confirmation:** Sacramental preparation is led by Fr. Meyer and a dynamic team of catechists every Wednesday at St. Lawrence. These classes are for our 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Please let us know if your child needs to be confirmed.

**Servers:** We believe that young people being engaged in the Holy Mass is a wonderful and beautiful act of love. Please be patient as we work with, train, and form our altar servers. If you have a child 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up who is interested, please let us know. They can still join!

**RCIA:** For those interested in joining the Catholic Church, we offer classes on Thursday nights at 6:30 pm at St. Lawrence. Any adult wanting to learn more about the faith is welcome to attend. This is a united effort for the entire county for all 4 parishes!

**Religious Education:** We offer two opportunities to help parents in their role as *primary educators* of their children in the ways of the faith! Both are on Sunday morning at 9:00 AM with options at St. Mary's and St. Teresa. We also offer resources for those who choose to educate their children at home. If your child is not registered, please contact the parish office as soon as possible.

**School Ministry:** Both of our schools are off to a great year! It is still the plan to merge St. Mary's into St. Lawrence next school year. Please pray for our children, teachers and staff.

**Youth Ministry:** We have begun a youth program that has monthly meetings with great speakers. We also are participating in larger events - over 100 teens and chaperones are attending the National Catholic Youth Conference in November!

**CONNECT:** We have started a new ministry to help keep you connected; the ministry is simply called CONNECT! Please visit our ministry after or before weekend Mass to ask questions, get info on baptism, marriage, mass intentions, scheduling a facility, etc. The idea is to bring much of the parish office offerings right to you when you are at Holy Mass on the weekend. You can also leave your contact information with the CONNECT ministers for Fr. Meyer or Fr. Mahan to contact you. We realize that due to the Mass schedule they do not have adequate time to have in-depth conversation with parishioners after the weekend Masses.

**Mass Intentions:** If you desire to have a Mass said for a special intention, please contact the parish office and they will do all they can to accommodate the date you desire 812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com). Please know in advance that this is not always possible; thanks for your understanding.

**Unity in the Office and Bulletin:** After consultation with all three parish councils, we made the bold decision to bring the offices together much earlier than ever imagined. It became very clear early on that the replication of work was unnecessary, challenging, causing miscommunications and wasted resources. Please be patient as we find the best systems and ways to serve you in the office and through the bulletin and websites. Please contact the parish office with any questions or concerns. We are here for you! (812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com))

**Our Staff:** As you know, our staff has undergone many changes during these first 100 days and they have done so with a renewed spirit of collaboration, even during times of uncertainty and challenge. Please be patient with them as they navigate through the months ahead and know they are here to serve you!

**Scheduling a Facility:** If you want to use a facility for a ministry or family gathering at any of our parish sites, please contact the parish office to make a reservation. (812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com))

**How Can I Get Something to the Office:** You can always leave a message with a CONNECT volunteer, email the office, drop by the office, or drop a note, letter, registration form, reimbursement etc. into the collection box/basket at the weekend Masses. It will make its way to the parish office! You may also contact the parish office directly 812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com).

**How do I Submit Something to the Bulletin:** Please send any bulletin submissions to the parish office via email. You can also call the office or stop by. (812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com))

**How to Donate:** Donations are gladly accepted for our three parishes, two schools, St. Vincent de Paul, or any of our many ministries. You can mail donations to the parish office, drop off at the office or place it in the collection basket/boxes with instructions on how you would like your funds to be distributed. Contact the parish office to sign up for electronic giving for your Sunday contributions. There are three separate parishes and three finance councils; your donation is kept for the ministry and upbuilding of the parish that you donate to.

**How Can I Get Involved:** If you see a need in our parish, please be creative and step in to fill that need. We are collectively the Body of Christ. Do not be afraid to step up or offer your gifts! In a few weeks, there will be an opportunity to sign up for parish ministries and we ask that you be bold and generous. Contacting the parish office is also a great way to get engaged in ministries 812-537-3992 ~ [parishoffice@dccatholics.com](mailto:parishoffice@dccatholics.com). Presently, the areas of greatest need include:

- Planning and Executing Parish Social Events
- Parish and Finance Councils

- Maintenance (Facilities and Grounds) Committee for Each Parish
- Visiting the sick
- Youth Ministry Young Adult / Adult Support Team
- Bereavement Committee for Each Parish
- Active Prayer Groups for Those Requesting Prayer
- Adult Formation, Bible Study Group Leaders

**Empty Buildings:** What is happening with unused facilities? Right now, nothing, but know that we are praying about it! Right now, we do not want to act fast, we want to pray and discern and see where God is leading us; we believe in endless possibilities.

**We Have Survived the Changes but What About the Future:** Only God knows fully what the future holds and we trust in His Providence (we mean this- there is not clear plan- please be patient). We are 100 days-in on the pastorate we have been assigned: to serve 4 separate parishes in solidum. As we have seen, changes have been put into motion as we adapt to serve our communities with best practices, prayer, and joy. As we make these adjustments, we do so with the Code of Canon Law as our guide - these are things that must stay constant:

1. Holy Mass is celebrated regularly, as are the sacraments of the Church (*Baptism, Confession, Anointing...etc.*)
2. Every parish must have its own Finance Council. Parish assets (*money, land, buildings, savings, endowments*) belong to the parish. Likewise, every parish is responsible for its own expenses.
3. Expenses common to all parishes are shared equally (*for example the salary and benefits of our two priests*)
4. A moral and fiduciary responsibility is placed upon the pastor(s) to protect the assets of the parish, and not to commingle the assets of one parish with those of another.

As you have read, a lot has happened, is happening and will continue to happen. We believe in a God who is not dead, but alive. Our parishes are alive and evolving into God's Kingdom here on earth. There has been a lot of change, and change is hard, but hopefully for the good (even if we cannot see it yet)! Please be patient and know that we believe that God has a plan for you individually, but also for us as parishes in southeastern Indiana. We have not been sent here with a clear-cut vision or plan. We are discerning, struggling and daily trying to do all we can to serve you.

In closing, neither of us know exactly how the next 100 days are going to look, but we wake up every day excited and eager to serve you. We trust in the Lord and continue on this journey with the Lord and with each of you.

In His Service,

Fr. Jonathan Meyer and Fr. Daniel Mahan ~ Pastors in Solidum

P.S. We enclosed a small card with the contact info for the parish office and our contact info on it. Please consider putting it in a prominent place so you can contact us, and also as a reminder to pray for your pastors and parish family.

P.S.S. We also included a short explanation of a logo we hope to use as we continue to move forward.



**Introducing a Parish Office Logo:** The three images are separate because the logo represents three separate parishes. They over-lap due to these three parishes sharing the same faith, parish priests and office. St. Lawrence is represented in red and has flames of fire and a grill due to his martyrdom. St. Mary's is represented in blue and has a flower in honor of the Blessed Mother and the intertwined "A" and "M." which are an abbreviation of the words Ave Maria, the Hail Mary in Latin. St. Teresa is in brown for the religious order of the Carmelites, to which she belonged; the intertwined star of David and cross symbolize her conversion from Judaism to Christianity, and the large cross represents her full religious name- Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

We hope and pray this logo used intertwined for common events and ministry, and broken apart for individual parish events, can help signify an honoring of our past, a recognition of our present and look toward our future!

