August 23, 2020

My Dear Parishioners of St. Thomas More,

As was announced last weekend, at St. Thomas More the 8:30 Mass will be discontinued and the 10:00 mass will resume on Sunday, September 6th in the Transitional Schedule. That decision is based on what will likely be the future attendance at Sunday masses. Due to the pandemic, as well as the usual summer decline, attendance at all the masses has been decidedly lower. The 10:00 Family Mass historically has had reduced attendance during the summer months. That is the reason why it was discontinued in the former Transitional Schedule. The 8:30 mass has always had the lowest attendance of all the masses. Hence, in the new Transitional Schedule this mass is being discontinued and the 10:00 mass reinstituted. If it should happen that families not return in the expected numbers, then we may very well revert to the former Transitional Schedule, reinstituting the 8:30. In these uncertain times we have to do the best we can in adjusting to the "new normal." Another consideration is to be fair in having an equal number of masses at each of the two worship sites.

Even before the pandemic, the Archdiocese informed us that we (as well as other parishes) had to reduce our mass schedule. That is because the aging of the clergy will inevitably lead to the reduced staffing of parishes, resulting in the availability of fewer priests to celebrate mass. The clergy of OLGC-STM are well within that senior age cohort. Additionally, two of the priests presently serving the parish are not of the Archdiocese and could quite possibly leave at any time, without being replaced. The rationale behind these changes is to get ready for what will be forced upon us by the inevitable aging of the clergy.

We realize that some will not be pleased with these scheduling changes, but we have no choice but to make adjustments in an age of a diminishing number of priests. We thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,
Reverend Kevin V. Madigan
Pastor