

**Pastor's Notes: Changes Ahead and Perspective**

July 25, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

As tumultuous as the past couple of years have been for the world and our parish, we find ourselves once again at a time of transition, with Fr. Moises' transfer and the pope's new *motu proprio* regarding the Latin Mass.

**Fr. Moises' Transfer, the 7am Monday Mass, and Confessions**

As of August 1, Fr. Moises Moreno, who has served as Chaplain of our Hispanic Community this past year, has been assigned to Gatlinburg to serve as Parochial Vicar of two parishes: St. Mary in Gatlinburg and Holy Cross in Pigeon Forge, and he will lead their Hispanic communities. Let us pray for Fr. Moises in thanksgiving for his ministry here at the Basilica, and as he brings his gifts to these two new communities who need him, that he may be fruitful. Fr. Valentin and I remain assigned to the Basilica, and Fr. Tran remains in residence to help at the Basilica in addition to being full-time pastor of the Vietnamese community.

Without Fr. Moises, Fr. Valentin and I will be assuming all the regular responsibilities of our Hispanic community, whose numbers and needs are as many as our English-speaking community. We have determined some natural limits, and I ask your understanding.

- We will continue our regular Mass and confession times at the Basilica and the Newman Center, except that **we can no longer offer the 7am Monday Mass**, since Fr. Tran and I must take Sabbath rest on Monday.
- Regrettably, **we will not be able to hear as many people's confessions before Sunday Masses** as we could with three priests, because one priest has to prepare for Mass, and at times the second priest has other duties. If you come hoping to make your confession and we are not able to get to you, please understand our limitations and know that we are committed to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. With our many Sunday duties, we are hard pressed to take care of everything. We ask your mercy and patience.

**The Pope's July 16 Motu Proprio Regarding the Latin Mass**

There is still much to be understood about the pope's *motu proprio* regarding the Latin Mass, *Traditionis custodes*, issued on July 16. We anticipate it will lead to changes for the Basilica and many parishes throughout the world. At the time I write this, diocesan authorities have directed us to continue our 11:30 am Latin Mass as normal while this document is being interpreted. The Holy Father's express purpose is unity among the Catholic faithful. During this time of uncertainties, I encourage you to trust in the Holy Spirit's guidance of the Church universal, allow humility to temper our pride, and bear the fruits of the Spirit: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

**Pray for Our Sister Parish in Haiti**

Sometimes when I resort to thinking our "first world problems" are too burdensome, the Lord humbles me with better perspective. That enlightenment often comes when I hear from my brother priest, Fr. Alaine Prophete, pastor of our sister parish in Milot, Haiti. Our Catholic brothers and sisters in Haiti know extreme poverty and dangerous political unrest daily and have experienced earthquakes, flooding through a leaky roof, and fire following costly repairs of their roof, in the past few years. Their president was just assassinated this month. Yet Fr. Alaine's words are always full of hope, gratitude, and even joy in the blessings that God is providing for them, which are largely dependent upon our parish. He and his parishioners continue to cooperate with the Lord under circumstances which, on the one hand, seem to get worse, but on the other hand, bear fruit in their community, with each need and effort they entrust to Divine Providence. A little over a year after the April 2020 fire that destroyed most of their parish facilities, they are rebuilding their rectory and office in humble Haitian style, without the aid of property insurance we enjoy, but with the help of your regular donations—knowing that they do not yet have the money to complete it. Father is excited about all the rooms they are building and is looking forward to moving from living in a classroom to a home. Those who were displaced by our tornadoes in April 2020 can relate! Fr. Alaine shared the parishioners' thanks to their brothers and sisters at the Basilica and our Haiti Committee. I share with you here a couple of photos of their progress.

When we get frustrated with circumstances, complaint and anger may be the easier path, but gratitude and charity are the fruitful path. In your prayers and sacrificial offerings, please remember Fr. Alaine, who celebrated his 29th priestly anniversary on July 19, as well as Pope Francis, Bishop Stika, and all bishops and priests who are ordained to shepherd our fallen world.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

*Rev. J. David Carter*

