



Saint John Vianney Catholic Church

October 15, 2020

Dearly Beloved Parishioners,

If you have been to Mass lately or watched the live-streamed Mass in recent weeks, you have probably noticed a few changes. Although I explained these changes at all the Masses a couple of weeks ago, I definitely want everyone (even those who for whatever reason couldn't attend or see any of those Masses) to always be "in the loop" of where their parish is.

We gather at Mass to worship God and we spend the vast majority of the Mass praying to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. We all intuitively understand that, when we speak to other people, we face them. It would make sense for the same principle to apply to our prayers to our God, who is physically present in the Eucharist of the Tabernacle. So, we have moved our Lord in the Tabernacle to the front and center – He, not the priest or his chair, is the reason we gather in the Mass and we the priests and deacon have turned to face the Lord to whom we are praying in the same direction as the rest of the people of God, of whom we are a part. At those rare moments in which we clerics address the people gathered in worship, the Church in the same manner tells us to face the people to whom we are speaking.

This is not "the priest turning his back on the people" any more than any of you are "turning your back" on the person in the pew behind you. This is also not "turning back the clock" or any attempt at being anti-Vatican-II. The Missal of the New Mass tells the priest at certain points to turn and face the people; in other words, the Church assumes as a default that the priest is *not* facing the people for most of the Mass. The Church has allowed the Mass to be celebrated facing the people and, in most parishes, (as of now) the priest and the deacon do so; but that is not the same as saying it is forbidden for all of us to turn together to face the one Lord to whom we are all praying as the united people of God. The Church has clarified on numerous occasions that all of us "facing the East" together – a timeless posture – is completely acceptable.

Please know that, as your pastor, I am always willing to meet with whomever of our parishioners wants to share their thoughts, concerns and questions. My door is always open to you and so please do not hesitate to reach out to me in-person, by email or by phone.

May God bless us of us and all of us as a parish through the intercessions of Saint John Vianney and all the saints.

Yours in Christ,
Fr Richard Childress

449 North Water Avenue • Gallatin, Tennessee 37066-2305

Telephone: (615) 452-2977