

An Open Letter from the Pastor

August 10, 2014
"The Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time"

Dear Parishioner,

Let me start by saying how deeply touched I have been by the outpouring of concern and support from all of you regarding my upcoming surgery (scheduled for Monday, August 11). While it is only minor surgery, knowing you are remembering and praying for me really means a lot.

Along those same lines, let me openly express how wonderful it has been being stationed here. We have all grown in so many ways! We started out as two separate communities; and, working together, we have become united in our worship, service, and fellowship. We have added new ministries, and now offer an even greater diversity of opportunities to grow in our faith, and in our personal relationship with Jesus. Along the way, we have welcomed almost 250 new families into the parish, representing a variety of ages and cultural backgrounds.

However, we have now reached the point, where we need to adjust our Mass schedule to better adapt to the change in the number of priests assigned to our parish. As I mentioned in my last letter (June 29), *for the foreseeable future, I will be the only active priest assigned to the parish.* Fr. Joe Adamson and Msgr. Jim Tracy will continue to reside with us and assist me, but, since they are both retired, there are limitations to what I can rightfully ask of them. We also need to be mindful of the real possibility of illness for them and for me, as my upcoming surgery has vividly reminded me.

As you will recall, back in June, I made a temporary adjustment, suspending the 11:00 AM Mass at *Our Lady Queen of Peace*, for the summer. As promised, this Mass will return beginning Sunday, September 07. I also indicated that I would consult you before making any final change to the Mass schedule. To address this pressing need, there will be a meeting, open to all parishioners, at *Our Lady Queen of Peace Church*, in Pitman, that same day (Sunday, September 07, at 10:00 AM). The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss, and vote on, a new Mass schedule which will begin the following weekend, Sunday, September 14. The vote will be to decide which of the Sunday Masses will continue: the 9:00 AM, or the 11:00 AM. The vote will be taken, counted, and the result announced at this meeting.

Additionally, after much thought, many conversations, and even more prayers, I have decided to discontinue the 4:30 PM Mass, beginning the weekend of September 13/14. As you probably know, this Mass consistently is the least attended each weekend. Other concerns frequently expressed include: the lack of adequate handicapped parking (and parking in general), the hilly terrain being especially difficult to traverse during the winter and other severe-weather conditions, and the many steps at the entrance to the church. The 5:00 PM Mass at *Our Lady of Lourdes Church* will continue to be available, where adequate parking and greater access are already in place.

The weekday morning Mass schedule will remain unchanged:

Monday through Thursday, at 9:00 AM, at *Our Lady Queen of Peace Church*.

Friday and Saturday, at 9:00 AM, at *Our Lady of Lourdes Church*.

(We will not be bringing back the 6:30 PM weekday evening Mass in Glassboro.)

I realize that these changes are challenging, and I thank you in advance for your help and cooperation as we make the best of this transition to a "*one priest parish*." As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. It is my firm belief that together, we can --- and will --- continue to grow as disciples of our Lord, by being here for each other, and allowing Christ to guide us on our life's journey to him.

May God bless us all!

Fr. Jim