

BACK TO THE FUTURE...

...the return of the "Old Mass."

We will soon be making a change to our parish Mass schedule. With this bulletin insert, we want to inform all of our parishioners here at Transfiguration/St Stanislaus Kostka of this change, the reasons behind it, and why we think it not just necessary, but a good idea. With the support of our parish pastoral council and the Bishop, this will soon be a reality.

As you know, our parish has experienced a transition, from being two parishes to being one parish with two Mass centers. The idea is to preserve this arrangement into the future, and there are great advantages to it. The Transfiguration site offers us additional space for meetings and another site for Mass and confessions, a great blessing as the St Stanislaus site does not have adequate meeting space. We intend to maintain our present practice of scheduling our Saturday evening/Sunday Masses in both churches.

At the same time, we want to see our parish grow and prosper, and we need to be aware of the concerns of our Bishop which have led him to establish certain policies for every parish. The decline in the number of Priests *and* the size of congregations affect many aspects of diocesan life. The Bishop has directed that when Sunday Mass is celebrated, the church should be at least half full, rather than have fewer Priests offering multiple Masses for ever-dwindling congregations.

Realistically, taking a good look at our parish schedule, we see one problem, and an

opportunity as well. There are two 12:30 Masses – one at Transfiguration, the other at St Stanislaus. The Mass at St Stan's is our Spanish Mass; it has a healthy-sized congregation and we are grateful for the enthusiastic spirit of so many. The Mass at Transfiguration has only about thirty-five to forty people, yet obviously cannot be combined with a Spanish Mass. In discussion among our parish Priests, and with the support of the parish pastoral council, the following plan has been decided upon, on an experimental basis:

Beginning in January 2020, the Sunday, 12:30PM Mass at Transfiguration Church will be offered in Latin, in the "Extraordinary Form" of the Roman Rite, the liturgy which was used daily in both churches prior to the Second Vatican Council and up to 1970.

What is this all about? The truth is that this has been an initiative of lay people. Until recently, the Traditional Mass was celebrated every Sunday at 9AM in the chapel of St John Cemetery in Middle Village. A few months ago, this site changed, to St Josaphat Church in Bayside. The move caused problems for a number of faithful people who love the Latin Mass but for whom traveling to Bayside on public transportation on Sunday was not realistic. Some of these people contacted Msgr. Calise to ask if we could give another home to the old Mass.

In 1986, a commission of twelve cardinals who were convened to look into the question

concluded that the traditional Mass **had not been abrogated – legally suppressed – in the Church’s life.** Pope Saint John Paul II extended permission for the celebration of the old Mass decades ago, exhorting the Church’s Bishops to widely and generously offer this option. Pope Benedict XVI extended this arrangement even more widely, removing any impediments to it and flatly declaring that Catholics and their Priests had the right to the traditional liturgy if they wished it. Henceforth, he declared, the old Mass should be known as the “Extraordinary Rite” and have a place with the Ordinary Rite, with which we are all familiar, in the Church’s life.

Lest anyone think this is merely a provision for elderly nostalgics, it should be noted that there is widespread enthusiasm among committed young Catholics for the old Mass. A couple of years ago, the congregation at the cemetery chapel presented twenty-eight young confirmation candidates to Bishop DiMarzio. The regular participation of many young professional adults was noticeable there, as it is at the traditional Masses offered in Manhattan. We see this phenomenon in many places around the globe: monasteries and abbeys of monks and nuns which observe the traditional rites are flourishing, as are active Religious Orders founded upon the traditional Mass.

So, it appears that there is a need in our area for the Extraordinary Form of the Mass. This coincides with the desire of our Pastor and Priests that we meet the needs of parishioners who feel drawn to different spiritualities. We hope that this will appeal to people who love the old Mass and will be drawn to join our parish family. We especially hope that people alienated by badly implemented changes in the Church of years ago will be encouraged to come home.

Therefore, the plan is that

beginning SUNDAY OCTOBER 6th 2019, the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (the “traditional Mass”) will be offered in Transfiguration Church at 11AM on the Sundays of October, November and December EXCEPT THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH (which is the Lithuanian Mass).

beginning in January 2020, the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (the “traditional Latin Mass”) will be offered every Sunday at 12:30PM in Transfiguration Church.

This congregation will be fully and formally a congregation of the Parish of Transfiguration/St Stanislaus. We are looking forward to implementing this plan, and we hope that it will serve faithful Catholics who will enrich the life of our parish with their joyful enthusiasm for the Faith. People who love the traditional Mass and have not had access to it will be served by this. At the same time, our parishioners will have the opportunity to get acquainted or re-acquainted with an important part of our worship tradition.

For more information about the place of the traditional Mass in the life of the Church today, go to

<https://unavoce.org/>
<http://www.ecclesiadei.org/>
<https://clearcreekmonks.org/>

--Rev. Joseph Wilson