



Dear Parishioners,

I want to express my gratitude for everyone’s prayers during this process to discern our new shared Mass schedule, and for your feedback. **We received 700 surveys, many of them including additional comments.** I’ve read them all multiple times. One person took the opportunity to encourage me to speak more slowly during Mass. *Thankyouforthatfeedback!*



Fr. Jim Liekhus

In retrospect, we should have been clearer about defining what is considered early morning and late morning, and included an option for mid-morning. Some miss the pre-COVID Mass schedule, while others have found they prefer their new Mass time. One person stated that one parish should be devoted exclusively to Spanish ministry, while others expressed the exact opposite. Many shared the obstacles they face to attending Mass, such as transportation, distance, and time of day, which is very important for me to hear. ALL of the comments were constructive and given in a spirit of charity, which makes me very **hopeful for our future collaboration.**

First, I would like to share the Mass attendance of our three parishes from before COVID (every parish in the archdiocese counts Mass attendance for the month of October):

October 2019	English			Spanish			Total
	Sat. p.m.	9 a.m.	11 a.m.	11 a.m.	1 p.m.	6 p.m.	
St. Peter	140	157	141				438
St. Richard	227	235	304				766
Assumption	145	129		554	471	243	1542
Total	512	521	445	554	471	243	2746

The number that jumps out at me is the blue one – **2,746 total people attending Mass in Richfield every weekend.** If we consider ourselves together, that would put us second most in the entire archdiocese for weekend Mass attendance. If we are all willing to embrace our collaboration, imagine the ministries we could have and the good we could do with that many active Catholics attending Mass every Sunday!

The 2,746 people attending Mass in Richfield every weekend would make us the second-largest Catholic community in the entire archdiocese for weekend Mass attendance.

That is our hoped-for future. These months ahead are a sensitive time of transition, when I hope our parishioners will find a time and place to worship at one of our parishes that works for them; those who have been away because of COVID will be encouraged to come back; and those who are new to us feel welcome to join us.

As a reminder, priests are limited to celebrating two Masses on week- days and three Masses on Sunday (for these purposes, Saturday evening counts toward the weekday, not the Sunday.) In helping me make this decision, the Parish Council recommended that each parish would have a Mass on

Sunday morning. The Parish Council recommended that each priest have some time between their Masses so they could be with the people and not be rushed, as well as to **allow time for fellowship and hospitality.**

The Parish Council recommended that between the three parishes, there be one Saturday evening Mass in English, three Sunday morning Masses in English, and two Sunday morning/afternoon Masses in Spanish.

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I am grateful for the Parish Council's hard work on this recommendation. I will follow their recommendation, with the addition of a third Sunday afternoon Mass in Spanish, so that our Spanish-speaking parishioners have an option at all three parishes. **Here is the weekend Mass schedule, starting July 1:**

Saturday	4:00 pm	St. Peter (English)
Sunday	8:00 am	St. Peter (English)
Sunday	9:00 am	Assumption (English)
Sunday	10 :00 am	St. Richard (English)
Sunday	11:00 am	Assumption (Spanish)
Sunday	12:00 pm	St. Richard (Spanish)
Sunday	1:00 pm	St. Peter (Spanish)

On Sundays, one priest will celebrate Masses at 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and noon, the other at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. In choosing where the Sunday morning Masses in English at 8 a.m., 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. would be, I saw that it was possible to have two of the parishes keep their current Sunday morning Mass time, with the exception being St. Peter.

Because of that, I thought it fair that St. Peter would have the Saturday evening Mass. The feedback from the surveys was that earlier was preferred because it gets dark early in the winter, so I decided to have it at 4 p.m.

Next week, I will decide the weekday Mass schedule and confession schedule. I anticipate that we will have 8 a.m. Mass, Monday-Saturday, between the three parishes. With two priests serving us, we have the opportunity to have a second weekday Mass; I anticipate that being toward the end of the workday, so that there will be space for funerals around midday. School Masses would be in addition to these. I anticipate confessions will be scheduled around our weekday Masses, including Saturdays.

That's a lot of sacramental celebration! Of course, that's what you'd expect with a Catholic community that is the second largest in the archdiocese. I know not everyone sees their first choice on this schedule, but I hope you understand the reasoning behind it and can find your place in it. It's not perfect, so if you can't, the Parish Council members and I want to hear from you. We probably can't find a solution for every situation, but that doesn't mean we don't care and don't want to hear it. We do.

There are parishioners at all three parishes who have been members for many, many decades, and it is not our intention to leave anyone behind. We'll do the best we can.

Thank you again for your prayers during this process – for me, our Parish Council, our staff, and our parishes.

The Holy Spirit is just getting warmed up! I can't wait to see what He has in store for us as we move forward together.

In Christ,



Rev. Jim Liekhus

To share your feedback or ask questions:

Call: 612-440-7573 or

Email: info@richfieldareacatholics.org

A member of parish leadership will follow up with you personally.