



July 1, 2023

Dear Mary, Queen of Angels Parishioners,

We are now approximately 12 months into the implementation of Beacons of Light and are working to fully implement our families of parishes within both the Logan and Champaign Counties.

For three months, I have been working with the Champaign County Parish Council to finalize a plan for Mass schedules. Aligned with the Archdiocese, our goal is to build a weekend Mass schedule that serves the spiritual needs of Champaign County by utilizing one priest on a weekend who celebrates a maximum of two Masses per day. Our first step was to form a single Champaign County Parish Council that includes members representing all four churches. Next, we analyzed data about our churches and Mass attendance. We developed two options for Mass schedules and asked for parishioner feedback. The Parish Council, Father Jacob Lindle, and I all reviewed the feedback. Through it all, we prayed to discern God's will for our parishes. This past Tuesday, Parish Council members made a final recommendation, which I accepted as Pastor.

To that end, on behalf of our Parish Council, Father Jacob, and myself, I am pleased to announce the new weekend Mass schedule, which centers Champaign County worship within a single location:

- 5:00 PM Vigil Mass at St. Mary
- 8:30 AM Sunday Mass at St. Mary
- 11:00 AM Sunday Mass at St. Mary

Benefits of Consolidating Mass Schedules for Champaign County

It is my sincere hope that the new Mass schedules will enable more fellow Champaign County Catholics to meet, deepening our relationships with one another – and with Jesus Christ. We will be able to bring together servers, lectors, sacristans, musicians, and other volunteers, making the Mass-going experience more vibrant for everyone. We are excited to leverage more broadly the gifts of our talented musicians to give glory to God and to create a sense of wonder and awe in God's presence. We will be able to draw on the gifts of all our parishioners in works of charity (like supporting our food pantry) and future evangelization efforts.

This schedule will allow our parishioners to experience aspects of parish life that aren't available with the current arrangement of four churches. Parishioners will be able to celebrate baptisms, first communions, weddings, blessings of catechists and students, and so many other events that aren't currently possible across all of our churches. It also allows the priest much greater availability after Masses.

This new schedule also enables more children to attend Sunday CCD classes (9:45-10:45 AM) and offers families the option of attending mass before or after CCD. It enables the priest to be present for CCD and affords the potential of drawing CCD volunteers from multiple churches. As we are keenly aware, there are lifelong benefits for children in enabling them to form a relationship with Jesus, early in their lives.

What to Expect Next

At the earliest, the new Champaign County Mass schedule will take effect the weekend of September 2-3, 2023, which is Labor Day weekend. Until then, the Parish Council, the Finance Council, Father Jacob, and I will continue to work through details about things like liturgical considerations, plans for the new 8:30 AM Sunday Mass, and how to preserve and celebrate the rich histories of all our churches. We look forward to engaging additional parishioners in these planning activities, and we will continue to share updates as various plans are finalized.

We are also pleased to host a series of Town Hall Meetings. The objectives are to respond to questions parishioners may have and to continue receiving feedback about the best ways to manage this transition. We greatly appreciate hearing everyone's perspectives and ideas. All parishioners are encouraged to attend the Town Hall Meetings:

- Immaculate Conception: Tuesday, July 11, 5:30 PM
- St. Michael: Wednesday, July 12, 5:30 PM
- Sacred Heart: Wednesday, July 19, 5:30 PM
- St. Mary: Sunday, July 16, 12:15 PM (After the 11:00 AM Mass concludes.)

With Confidence in God's Grace

We appreciate and share deeply in the emotions parishioners will experience. We are all being asked to make significant changes as we adopt the new weekend Mass schedule. In doing so, some faithful will be asked to leave behind a sacred building where, for decades, they celebrated Mass, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other sacraments. In other cases, they will encounter changes to music and liturgical considerations.

I encourage you to be sensitive to the varied emotions of your fellow parishioners. Be patient and gentle with one another, and with the changes overall. Ask the Blessed Mother for her spiritual strength and guidance.

With confidence in God's grace, we can embrace these changes as opportunities. We want Mary, Queen of Angels to become a vibrant center of worship and community that welcomes even more people into a life-changing encounter with Jesus through communion with the Catholic Church.

It remains a distinct honor – for Father Jacob and me both – to serve this wonderful community of Champaign County faithful. Please join us in praying for continued wisdom and discernment and be assured of my prayers for all of you.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,
Father Shawn Landenwitch, Pastor