

TRI-PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

October 29, 2018

6:00 PM Open Meeting for Parishioner Input

7:00 PM at St. Joseph, Stringtown

Welcome

An open meeting was held at the St. Joseph Stringtown Parish Hall. Our Tri-Parish Partnership will offer three masses in the near future. Three proposed mass schedules had been shared in the bulletin, to be used for discussion:

1. One Mass at each Parish
2. Rotate one Saturday Mass and offer Sunday morning Masses at St. Joseph Olney and Holy Cross Wendelin
3. Suppress St. Joseph Stringtown/merge within Olney boundaries, Stringtown location would be considered "Chapel" status. Create one Finance Council, all assets and liabilities of St. Joseph Stringtown would merge with St. Joseph Olney. Cemetery would be kept separate.

Fr. Mark opened the meeting with prayer. He then offered statistics used for Pastoral Planning.

- Priests in the Belleville Diocese can only offer three scheduled weekend Masses.
- Current number of Parishes in Belleville Diocese = 104
- Current number of active Priests = 48
- Number of Priests declaring they will retire by 2020 = 22
- Number of Priests with serious health issues = 4

In addition, for consideration:

- Sunday Celebration in the Absence of the Priest (SCAP) is only for emergency use
- We cannot depend on using any Priests from outside the Belleville Diocese.

The meeting was opened for comments by participants.

- Can we request Priests from Monasteries, similar to Teutopolis to say weekend Masses?
- Saturday night Mass does not count as Sunday Mass. What are the guidelines for shutting down a Parish? Who has the rights to do so? We will lose Catholics if we continue combining Parishes
- Can we televise from one Church to another?
- We need to get along. When we (current Tri-Parish Partnership) grow to more Parishes, what will happen? Make Belleville make this decision.
- We are all together. We need to use SCAP sometimes. Can we do a Saturday evening, two Sunday morning, and one Sunday evening?
- We want to get more people here. Who will be closed or suppressed next?
- Join together. Has been working toward that with our youth programs
- Many of us have relation at all three Parishes. Keep all three Parishes alive because we call them "home". What other ways can I serve to keep them going?
- Let's keep a Mass at Stringtown to keep everyone going as long as possible. Can see where the future is heading.

- Wants a home for her children to come back to. In favor of a Mass at every Parish every weekend.
- Financial ramifications of suppression. St. Joseph Olney took a financial “hit” when they lost one Mass.
- Work together. Masses at each Parish each weekend.
- Let’s postpone this decision until a new Bishop is named next year.
- Sticking up for Fr. Mark. There are not more people trying to be Priests. Why isn’t Belleville helping us? How do we make this happen?
- How many Parishes could be included in our Partnership in the near future?

Fr. Mark closed the open meeting with remarks that he will be in Israel on a Pilgrimage in three weeks, he will use that time to pray about the decisions that must be made; a Priest cannot suppress a Parish; a Bishop can suppress a Parish; a Parish can ask to be suppressed due to financial (lack thereof) or other reasons; the idea of building a new Church, centrally located for all three current Parishes can be placed on the table; with the current situations at Lawrenceville and Fairfield/Flora, it is possible that one Priest could be asked to serve six parishes by 2020.

The Tri-Parish Partnership Pastoral Council meeting was called to order at approximately 7:30 p.m.

****The meeting was opened for comments and thoughts about the open portion of the meeting.**

- No decision will be made at this meeting.
- Should we expect the decision be made by Fr. Mark? That is a lot of pressure on a leader who will be staying in the community. Should it be the Pastoral Councils or the Bishop? Other Partnerships have asked the Bishop to decide.
- Some of the people speaking were not considerate of the feelings of people from other Parishes.
- Financial or other “crisis” is not the only reason to suppress.

****Parishioner Count at Masses during October 2018 was shared:**

	4:30 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	8:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.
Oct 6th/7th	104	95	261	243
Oct 13th/14th	164	107	253	272
Oct 20th/21st	112	135	225	297
Oct 27th/28th	142	128	220	326

****Christmas Mass Schedule 2018**

We reviewed the Christmas Mass schedule. The only change for this year was to be for St. Joseph Stringtown and St. Joseph Olney to switch the 4:00 p.m Christmas Eve and the 11:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Masses. This was followed with much discussion due to choir and children's program traditions for St. Joseph Olney. The schedule was set for:

December 22: St. Joseph Olney Children's Program
Christmas Eve: St. Joseph Stringtown 4 p.m.
Holy Cross Wendelin 9:30 p.m.
St. Joseph Olney 11:30 p.m.
Christmas Day: St. Joseph Olney 8:30 a.m.
Holy Cross Wendelin 10:30 a.m.

Fr. Mark shared a revised schedule via email later in the week:

Christmas Eve December 24.....4:00 pm at St. Joseph-Olney
9:30 pm at Holy Cross-Wendelin
11:30 pm at St. Joseph-Olney

Christmas Day December 25....8:30 am at St. Joseph-Stringtown
10:30 am at Holy Cross-Wendelin

Next year (2019) St. Joseph Stringtown will have the 11:30 p.m. mass on Christmas Eve. St. Joseph Olney will have the 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve and the 8:30 a.m. Christmas Day masses.

****No Tri-Parish Partnership Pastoral Council meeting is planned for December.**

The St. Joseph Stringtown Finance Council will meet on Wednesday, October 31, 2018.

The Holy Cross Wendelin Finance Council and Pastoral Council will meeting on Monday, November 12, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.